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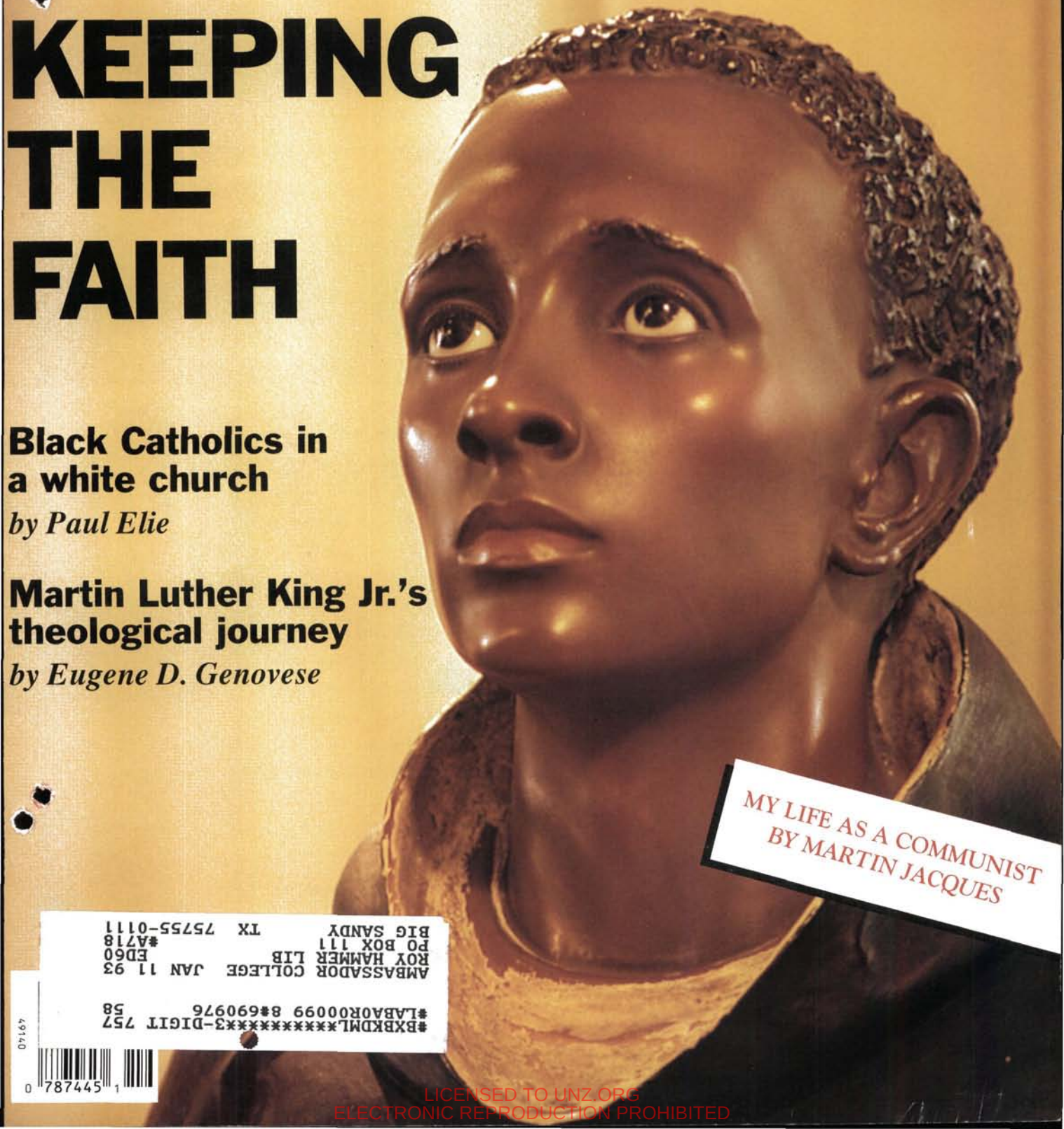

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A Weekly Journal of Opinion

MAY 11, 1992

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CORRESPONDENCE

Aliens

To the editors:

Although it is true that the Immigration and Naturalization Service has its share of bureaucratic inefficiency, Weston Kosova's "The INS Mess" (April 13) contained more blatant fiction and irresponsible characterizations than facts and thoughtful analysis. Some examples:

Typical deportation proceedings take from two to seven *years*. This is not exactly the "swift deportation" the author criticizes. Kosova's claim that the INS "rounded up and expelled nearly 1 million illegals" last year is also misleading. In fact, in 1991 the INS deported only 32,870 illegal aliens. If the INS "only grudgingly administers" its non-police responsibilities, how did more than 1.8 million aliens receive permanent resident status in 1991 alone?

Kosova also needs to examine the law on excludable aliens. Former and/or involuntary members of the Communist Party may readily obtain a waiver from a consular officer and receive a visa. Since 1982, when the INS began keeping statistics, only 1,420 people have been excluded for being "subversives or anarchists" (which includes Communists). The "lookout" list that Kosova claims blacklists people for their "political beliefs" mostly lists those convicted of multiple felonies, including drug trafficking and aggravated felonies, terrorists, and others known to be excludable under the law.

On medical exclusions, Donald Goldman, a member of the National Commission on AIDS, needs to check out his facts as well. Tuberculosis is on the government's list of "highly communicable diseases" and has been since 1907. The author's comparison of terminal cancer patients with HIV and AIDS carriers is ridiculous. Cancer is clearly not a communicable disease.

Finally, Kosova concludes his list of recommendations to the INS by saying that "the INS should at least try to live up to the 'give us your poor' refrain" on the Statue of Liberty. There are some 3.2 *billion* poor people in the world. Kosova obviously did not think carefully about the ramifications of his proposals.

ROSEMARY JENKS
Washington, D.C.

The writer is an analyst with the Center for Immigration Studies.

Weston Kosova replies:

1) Sure, typical deportation proceedings take between two and seven years. But compared with the wait of three to fourteen years to get into the United States, that *is* swift. 2) It was not misleading to write that the INS expelled nearly 1 million illegals last year; that figure was supplied by the INS. It is misleading, however, for Jenks to make that number appear smaller by confusing it with the number of deportations: as she knows, they are two different things. 3) Whether involuntary members of the Communist Party can readily obtain visas is irrelevant. *Voluntary* members, like recent former members, have great difficulty gaining entry despite federal laws forbidding their exclusion. 4) Contrary to Jenks's claim, the government's "lookout list" is used primarily to exclude foreigners on the basis of political beliefs, not criminal records. 5) Jenks is correct to point out my error about tuberculosis. However, it is not ridiculous to compare terminal cancer patients with AIDS carriers. The government claims it bars AIDS patients because it cannot afford to pay for their health care. If that were true, then it would logically exclude cancer patients also. 6) The total number of poor people in the world is irrelevant; I did not advocate throwing open the borders to all of them. The article's clear point was that poor people who are eligible under the law to immigrate but can't afford the INS's usurious fees or a lawyer to tangle with its indifferent bureaucracy don't stand a chance.

To the editors:

"Sit down and shut up," explained the bureaucrat in answer to my question about the day of my appointed interview. The day, I say, and not the hour; that, at least, I could just make out on the envelope. I pitied the other would-be immigrants who lacked even that much information.

If anything, Weston Kosova understates the terror the INS strikes in the hearts of its supplicants. As the wife of a U.S. citizen and the holder of a green card, I had every right to citizenship of this country. As a native speaker of English (albeit with a South African accent) and tolerably poised and articulate, I had no reason to turn to jell whenever a letter labeled "INS" arrived. But I did. My experience surely pales beside those of the immigrants who hardly speak the language and whose papers may not be in perfect order. I teach English to such people and often wonder how the INS compares for them with its counterparts in the regimes many of them have fled.

JENNIFER ROSS
Forest Hills, New York

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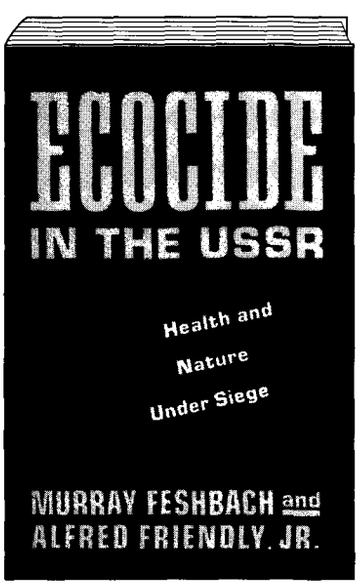

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Embarrassment of Riches

To the editors:

It seems to me that Frank Rich is stuck between a rock and a hard place when it comes to his critics. In his condemnatory article ("An Embarrassment of Riches," March 16) Robert Brustein complains that Rich's taste is "essentially safe, middle of the road, and consumer oriented" while critics like Liz Smith maintain that Rich is too highbrow and out of touch with the average theatergoer. Although Rich-bashing is currently in vogue and though everyone bemoans the sorry state of the theater, no one ever seems to mention the sorry state of theater criticism in New York. Brustein accurately states that Rich is "an elegant stylist with a lively, witty, urbane mind," but is there anyone else writing about theater in New York about whom that could be said?

Brustein is misleading when he writes that Rich "savaged" *Nick and Nora* (he merely called it mediocre) and unfair in his implication that Rich closed the show (the show received uniformly negative reviews). He also labels a number of shows favorably reviewed by Rich as being "uniform enough in their middle-class furrow-browed angst." Is that a fair charge to level against shows like *Eastern Standard, Marvin's Room, Falsettos,* and *Lips Together, Teeth Apart,* with their implicit, unsettling messages about death and AIDS? If Rich hadn't liked these shows, couldn't and wouldn't Brustein level the same arguments against him?

EZRA ZONANA
New York, New York

To the editors:

Robert Brustein appears to fall into the very trap he's alerting his readership to: he describes Frank Rich's reviewing in *The New York Times* as the only game in town, effectively reinforcing that status in the minds of the public. There is more than a touch of demagoguery in the spectacle of Brustein—who has long dominated theater commentary in TNR as completely as Rich dominates it in the *Times*—complaining about this problem while failing to mention that there are other sources for good, solid theater criticism for those willing and serious enough to seek them out. *The Village Voice,* for instance, despite the shortcomings of its other departments, regularly publishes three of the finest critical voices around: Ross Wetzsteon, the theater editor, a fine, discerning, and unusually open mind; Jonathan Kalb, who recently won the prestigious George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism (an honor, incidentally, that Rich, many years his senior, has never won); and Michael Feingold who, despite his domination of the *Voice*'s theater space, still offers a worthy alternative to Rich's taste. Rather than plugging for a promotion for David Richards—surely the least original and interesting mind the *Times* has ever found to comment on the theater—why doesn't Brustein use his pulpit to mention the real competition and give them a toehold on the throne?

JULIE HEFFERNAN
Brooklyn, New York

Go ahead, shoot

To the editors:

In "Boy Toys" (Washington Diarist, March 30), Karen Lehrman has apparently discovered *Women & Guns* and found it politically incorrect. The magazine was never intended for day-trippers like Lehrman who are astonished that women have different handgun carry problems than men, or that products are often advertised to appeal to targeted audiences. The magazine is for women who have already made a choice regarding gun ownership.

Lehrman and other "feminists" (who conveniently get to define the term to their own frightened satisfaction) have continued to accuse *Women & Guns* and programs like the NRA's "It Can Happen to You" of exploiting women. But according to Lehrman, it's only a gun issue because "numerous studies" have shown a handgun is ineffective for self-defense. The only study she then mentions is one by the Violence Policy Center, an interested party in the debate, while ignoring the research of people like criminologist Gary Kleck and sociologists James Wright, Peter Rossi, and Kathleen Daly.

Women who can be vocal, cogent, and committed on some aspects of women's choices are utterly failing the millions of bruised, battered, and raped women when they apply a social wishfulness to the self-defense issue with their elitist standards. Lehrman is certainly free to wring her hands over this issue, as long as she admits that women who have made a serious choice regarding gun ownership are free to pursue their safety and freedom as they see fit.

PEGGY TARTARO
Bellevue, Washington
The writer is associate editor of *Women & Guns.*

Tired and emotional

To the editors:

In offering the "truth" about Japan ("Cliff Notes," March 23), Bruce Feiler plays cute with statistics. First, he pooh-poohs death by overwork. It's all a media invention, he suggests, because in the Japanese government's view, "only thirty cases qualified as *karoshi* in 1990." If that's Feiler's idea of truth, he might clear up the Tibetan problem for us by asking the Chinese government how many monks it persecuted in 1990.

Actually, in the first half of 1990 the families of *karoshi* victims reported more than 1,200 cases to an independent *karoshi* hotline. The thirty cases the Japanese Labor Ministry reluctantly accepted represent less than 5 percent of the claims filed annually. Estimates for actual cases in litigation-shy Japan go as high as 10,000 a year.

Feiler is correct to state that the overall teen suicide rate is higher in the United States than in Japan. That reflects the far greater social instability here. But the proportion of Japanese teen suicides that are in response to educational pressures (a laughable notion in the United States) is enormous. It reflects what is rightly called "entrance-exam hell." Last March 15, for instance, the Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri* reported: "A 19-year-old cram school student jumped to his death from a four-story building Wednesday in Machida, Tokyo. The young man apparently committed suicide after failing two private university entrance examinations, police said." Reacting to a steady drumbeat of stories like that, an advisory panel to the education minister asked him to "restore the humanity of children by correcting distortions in the current education system and lessening their mental stress." The unforgiving pressures of institutional Japan are real. So are the deaths that result.

CLAYTON NAFF
Ann Arbor, Michigan
The writer is a former UPI correspondent in Tokyo.

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While President Bush's health-care reform plan has helped reshape the debate over health care, it doesn't go far enough. As The Wall Street Journal put it recently: "The resulting Bush plan lacks the imagination of the innovative market reforms like those proposed by the Heritage Foundation."

Columnist Michael Kinsley, writing in The New Republic and The Washington Post, added: "The Heritage proposal should have great appeal to principled liberals, as well as principled conservatives."

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MAY 11, 1992

THE QUOTA PARTY

George Bush has taken so many sides on so many issues that it's hard to accuse him of lacking the courage of his convictions. Last year he blocked the passage of the Civil Rights Act for months because of his adamant objections to quotas. Now the president is confronted with embarrassing evidence that his own party indulges in quotas—indeed, that he did so himself as chairman of the Republican National Committee.

On April 7 District Judge Charles R. Richey handed down a startling decision that could fundamentally change the existing structure of the GOP. His ruling, prompted by a suit filed by the Freedom Republicans, a black-led interracial GOP group, said that the Federal Election Commission had to apply Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to the Republican Party as a condition for disbursing the $11 million by which the party will finance its Houston convention. According to the Bush Justice Department's interpretation, Title VI outlaws any designation of people by race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin—even if benevolently intended. But the RNC, by its rules, has designated seats on an executive council for a black Republican, a Hispanic, a "Jewish-American," and a representative of "Heritage groups" (i.e., non-Western European in origin).

What is the Republican Party system of privileges and quotas, and how did it come into being? Party rules are not mere appliances for housekeeping; they indicate a general philosophy about the role of party in the American form of government. For its first seventy years the Republican Party internally was the party of Lincoln, a majority rule party with no discriminatory clauses that rewarded or punished certain social groups. Then the GOP became the party of Harding and Coolidge, enamored of the idea that to whom much has been given, more is due. In the early 1920s the Republicans fundamentally altered their convention delegate apportionment formula, adopting a series of so-called "victory bonuses" that granted advantages to state delegations without regard to population or Electoral College weight. These bonuses quite apparently discriminated against the large states that contained the bulk of the non-WASPs, including Catholics and Jews, and tilted toward Western and Northern New England states thought to be more "American." This system was implemented by the same political figures who were also implementing, at the same time, radical changes in the immigration laws that favored northern Europeans against southern and eastern Europeans.

Over the decades, rather than ending the system of bonuses, the Republicans have continued adding to them while throwing a few sops to minorities. During the early 1970s the RNC added specially designated non-voting "auxiliaries"—symbolic ethnic and racial set-asides with handpicked leaders. Auxiliaries were nothing new: black Republican groups, for example, had been in existence since the Civil War. But the new structures were meant to give the appearance of diversity without opening up the party so that activists could rise from the ranks: tokens as well as quotas. The father of these quota-based special interest groups was the chairman of the RNC: George Bush. At the time he was happy to take credit for this innovation.

While the auxiliaries have not given blacks real clout in the RNC—today the only voting black members on the RNC are three committeemen from the Virgin Islands—they still represent a clear racial quota system. Thus while railing against quotas, the Republican Party has written them into its own rules and accepted federal funding as an entitlement. (The Democrats experimented with quotas in 1972 and explicitly rejected them. Their system of representation is federal, taking into account congressional districts as well as states.)

For more than ten years the Freedom Republicans have attempted to receive a fair study by the party, to end the quota system and to open up the party to genuinely more diverse representation. In response, the RNC has resorted to closed hearings, lost transcripts, all the while asserting that it has examined itself and found no flaw. Now Judge Richey (a Nixon appointee) has put the issue into forums not controlled by the RNC: the FEC; the Justice Department, which the judge has asked to assist the FEC in implementing the Civil Rights Act as applied to the GOP; and the White House counsel's office, which will advise the president on how the executive should respond.

No one is challenging the right of the Republican Party to organize itself as it pleases. But if it is truly opposed to quotas, it ought to change its structure. If it wishes to uphold quotas, it should forgo the federal funding for the GOP convention in Houston—and beyond. So far the White House has been silent. What is George Bush's position? We await a forthright statement from the leader of the Republican Party, and an explanation of whether he will keep the federal money or, as a matter of good faith, give it back. •

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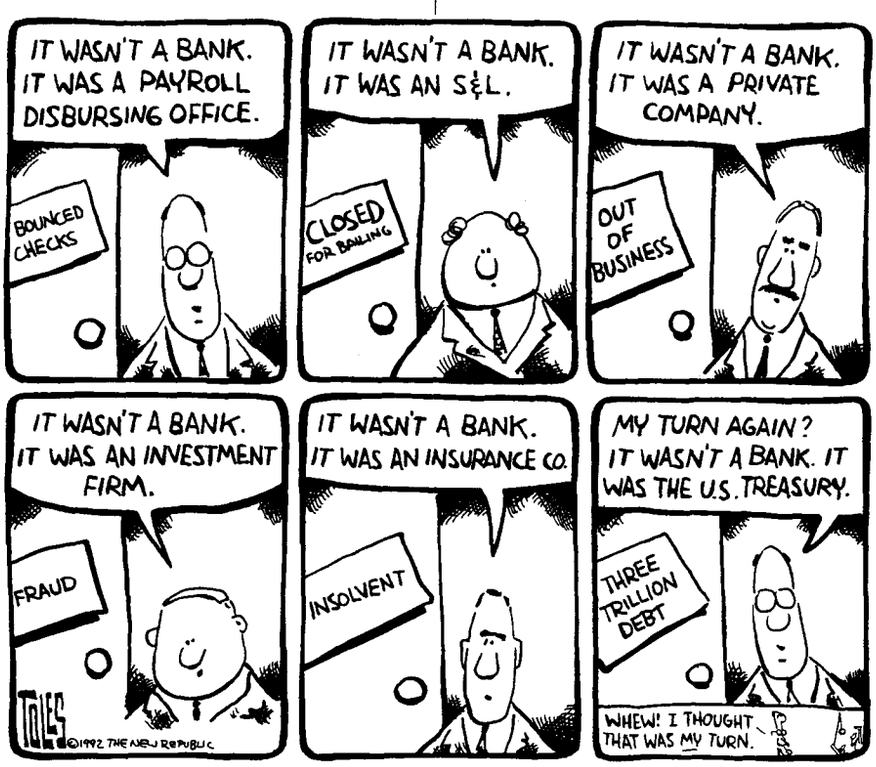
NOTEBOOK

BUSHISM OF THE WEEK: "Just got back from North Korea. He told me there are very few cars and that everybody is compelled to aerobic walk by their noble leader." —April 18, in Kennebunkport, Maine, on Billy Graham's recent trip to North Korea. Later, asked about the possibility of normalized relations with North Korea, Bush replied, "Just in favor of aerobic walking."

AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE: "Although there are now twenty-plus independent Arab states, the Arab world itself, with its rulers and regimes and presidents, is a catastrophe.... The Arab world is a sink. It's a sink of corruption and mediocrity and the most appalling and murderous tyrannies. There are no democratic freedoms. It's just a dreadful place." Who said this? William Safire? Fouad Ajami? Salman Rushdie? Martin Peretz? None of the above. The speaker was Edward Said, the media's favorite Arab-American intellectual, in an interview with Pakistan's *The Herald*, February 1992.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WHEW! I THOUGHT THAT WAS MY TURN.

DON'T HAVE A COW: Leafing through *Beyond Beef*, Jeremy Rifkin's latest screed against all things bovine, one learns that burgers may be responsible for everything from global warming and soil erosion to obesity and groundwater pollution. Fair enough. But in "Part Six—The Consciousness of Beef Eating Cultures," Rifkin holds forth in successive chapters on "The Psychology of Beef" ("Eating is as much concerned with *eros* as with *thanatos* ..."), "Meat and Gender Hierarchies" ("Roasting has always been associated with power ... while boiling has always been associated with curative and regenerative values and frugality"), and "Beef, Class, and Nationalism" ("Beef psychology ... has been used to justify colonial policies and the subjugation of foreign people"). Ultimately, he says, "the psychological reach of the modern cattle complex has extended even further, affecting our very conceptions of time and space and the underlying principles that make up the modern worldview."

BACK TO FUNDAMENTALS: We've been struck by the mounting hysteria in the West about Muslim fundamentalism. What this fails to see is that the most brutal regimes in the Middle East are not the fundamentalist but the secular ones. Iraq is a secular dictatorship, whose genocidal campaign against Kurds and Shiites continues. Syria, terrorism-sponsor, invader of Lebanon, is no pious realm. Libya keeps fundamentalism at bay while sponsoring atrocities such as the Pan Am bombing, and has been shielded in this by two non-fundamentalist states, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Even the fundamentalist rivals to the PLO in the West Bank, Hamas, have not as yet proved themselves any more intransigent than the former. This is not to say, of course, that Islamic fundamentalism is a force for good in the world. Merely that it does not have a copyright on evil.

JUST TESTING: New York City's Fire Department has come to the patronizing conclusion that minorities are incapable of doing well on multiple-choice tests. So, starting next month, takers of the department's exam will not choose the correct answer: they will *rank* their top three answers. If their No. 1 answer is correct, they get a point. If their No. 2 answer is correct, they get half a point, and so on. The cost of developing this test was $400,000. The only minority the scheme will help is the incompetent—that is, if they're a minority.

POETRY CORNER: With this issue, the poetry editorship passes into new hands, as it does every half decade or so. We thank Richard Howard for his long and enlightened tenure; and we're delighted to welcome Mary Jo Salter, a frequent contributor, to the post. The

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author of two books of poetry, *Henry Purcell in Japan* and *Unfinished Painting*, as well as a children's book, *The Moon Comes Home* (all Knopf), she teaches in the English department at Mount Holyoke College.

WHITE HOUSE OR BUST:

Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini
Damned Soul, c. 1619-20

Bill Clinton
Time, March 30, 1992

(thanks to Randolph Melick, Grand Rapids, Michigan)

The case for offensive humor.

EXCUUUSE ME

By David Segal

It was inevitable that the chill of sensitivity now felt in public discourse and academic life would eventually come to comedy. But p.c. humor has arrived more swiftly—and completely—than even ardent activists could have hoped. Take three films written and directed by David and Jerry Zucker and Jim Abrahams. *Airplane*, released in 1980, has a slew of gay bits, two black men speaking indecipherable jive over subtitles, close to a minyan of Jewish jokes, drug gags, references to bestiality, nun jokes, five obscenities, and one gratuitous front shot of a naked woman. *Naked Gun*, released in 1989, contains only one drug joke, one obscenity, no nudity, not a single Jewish joke, and three gay lines. In 1991 and *Naked Gun 2½*, there were no obscenities, no frontal nudity, just two ethnic slurs, three tentative gay jokes, and one muttered "mazel-tov." Moreover, an earnest stripe of environmentalism is painted down the movie's middle. At the end of the film the protagonist says, "Love is like the ozone layer: you only miss it once it's gone" without a hint of irony.

It's been a long slide downhill. Like the deficit, off-color humor touches everyone but has no constituency, and neither politicians nor pundits will be clamoring for its return anytime soon. But there are good reasons to lament its passing. Let me count the ways.

Risqué humor defuses tensions. Lenny Bruce used to do a stand-up routine in which he'd gesture to each ethnic minority in the room and call them the most offensive names in the book: "I got a nigger here, two spics there...." When his audience was ready to assault him, he'd reveal his point: that epithets get at least part of their sting precisely by being placed off-limits. By spreading the abuse about, you take the sting out of it. (The caveat, of course, is that if you're going to use ethnic humor, you should avoid singling out any particular group for derision.) Today's puritans, in contrast, are a drag on our culture, impeding frank talk about race, sex, class, and sexuality, and deadening our public wit at the same time. It's no coincidence that in the 1980s, before multiculturalism killed racial jokes, productive discussions of race were more common.

Risqué humor educates. The experience of American Jews in this country may be the best example of how this works. For decades the capacity of Jewish comedians to poke fun at the peculiar tics of their people helped make Jewish otherness, a quality that aroused suspicion and hatred in bygone eras, something disarming. It's a safe bet that the films of Mel Brooks and Woody Allen did more to stymie anti-Semitism in the past twenty years than all the wide-eyed vigilance and arm-waving of the Anti-Defamation League. When a quick cut-away shot in *Annie Hall* reveals that the grandmother of Allen's WASPy girlfriend sees him as a bearded and yarmulked rabbi, we laugh even as we empathize with his discomfort. Gays have used humor the same way. You'd be hard-pressed to watch *La Cage Aux Folles*, a musical about a troupe of mincing gay entertainers, and have your homophobia strengthened. *Airplane* had a character—John, an air traffic controller—whose jokes, improvised by gay actor and activist Steve Stucco, made fun of gay sensibility without attacking it. When someone hands him a piece of paper and asks what he can make of it, Stucco begins folding it and says, "Oh a brooch, or a hat, or a pterodactyl."

Risqué humor disarms. A classic—and rare—modern example is "In Living Color," which showcases merciless skits about black culture. (The reason it survives the p.c. police is that it's largely written and acted by blacks.) Witness a *Star Trek* spoof, "The Wrath of Farrakhan," a vicious lampoon of the black Muslim leader; or a sketch making fun of West Indians' hard-work habits. The feature "Men on Films," starring Damon Wayans and David Alan Grier (a.k.a. Antoine and Blaine), breaks taboos and wows both gay and straight audiences—while enraging the humorless activists. One regular skit centers on "Handi Man," a caped, spastic superhero who foils villains with his dwarf sidekick. To believe this hardens prejudice against people with disabilities is to believe that people are fundamentally barbaric; and assuming the handicapped are too tender a subject for humor is more patronizing than outright disdain. Indeed, there may be no better way to perpetrate a myth of disabled otherness than coming up with euphemisms like "the differently abled" and making irreverent utterances off-limits.

Risqué humor undermines prejudices. A black comic I

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recently saw had the right idea: he said he got so mad when a grocery clerk snickered about his purchase of frozen fried chicken that "I just grabbed my watermelon and tap danced on out of there." The joke both played with stereotypes and ridiculed them: sometimes the best offense is offense. The major problem with ethnic humor—that it is often deployed by the powerful against the powerless—is best answered not by silencing the powerful (that hardly takes away their power) but by unleashing the humorous abilities of the powerless. Allowing ethnic humor means that blacks are allowed to make fun of whites (Eddie Murphy), gays are allowed to make fun of straights (Harvey Fierstein), and women are allowed to make fun of men (Roseanne Barr). In today's more ethically and sexually diverse media, little of this opportunity for humor is being realized. Diversity is being achieved; and the result, ironically, is more piety. This is not only a bore, but an insult to the rich traditions of gay, black, Jewish, female, fat, ugly, disabled humor—and a boon to society's wealthy, powerful, and largely unfunny elites.

Risqué humor is funny. Ethnic humor's final defense is that it makes people laugh. In a free society, this is an irrepressible—and admirable—activity, and one I suspect we did more of some years back. Ask yourself: Were you laughing harder a decade ago? When Buck Henry hosted "Saturday Night Live" in the 1970s he'd do a skit in which he played a pedophilic baby sitter who got his jollies by playing games with his two nieces, like "find the pocket with the treat" and "show me your dirty laundry." In 1967 Mel Brooks won a best screenplay Academy Award for *The Producers*, which was full of Jewish, gay, and Nazi jokes and is now a confirmed classic. Brooks's 1991 offering was *Life Stinks*, which was bereft of anything off-color and rightly panned.

As we've pushed the risqué off-stage, we've brought violent slapstick back on as a means of keeping the audience's attention. "Saturday Night Live" has abandoned racy material in favor of skits like "Horrible Headwound Harry," which features Dana Carvey as a party guest bleeding from the head. And last year *Home Alone*, the story of a little boy, played by Macaulay Culkin, who fends off two burglars from his house by, among other things, dropping a hot iron on their heads, became the most lucrative comedy of movie history, grossing more than $285 million. The violence was far more explicit than anything the Three Stooges ever came up with, and all of it was done by a 12-year-old. Compare this with *Animal House*, which used to be the top-grossing comedy; it was filled with sexist—and hilarious—moments like the one in which the conscience of Tom Hulle's character advises him to take advantage of his passed-out, underage date.

In a multicultural society like ours, humor is not a threat, it's a critical support. It keeps us sane, and it's a useful safety valve. If we can't be cruel about each other in jest, we might end up being cruel to each other in deadly seriousness. The politically correct war against insensitive humor might end up generating the very social and racial tension it is trying to defuse.

DAVID SEGAL is a Washington writer.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

LOGJAM

By Fred Barnes

Here's a true story about something getting done at George Bush's White House. Jay Lefkowitz, a young domestic policy aide, bumped into Sam Skinner, the White House chief of staff, in the hall of the West Wing in early April. "What are you working on?" Skinner asked. "I want to get this Beck decision implemented," Lefkowitz replied. Skinner perked up, knowing Bush's long-standing interest. The Supreme Court had ruled in 1988 (opinion by Justice William Brennan) that a non-union worker is not required to pay the part of union dues that goes for political activity. Lefkowitz told Skinner that Harry Beck, the electronics technician who won the case, and actor Charlton Heston, who'd lobbied Bush to follow through on the ruling, were available for a White House appearance. So Skinner instantly arranged a Rose Garden event for April 13, when Bush signed an executive order instructing federal contractors to inform non-union workers that they don't have to pay for union politicking.

Credit Skinner with breaking the logjam. But it was the exception that proves the rule. And the rule is inertia, dithering, cynicism, and fear of failure among Bush's senior aides and Cabinet. Small wonder, then, that Bush has so much trouble packaging an appealing, newsworthy domestic program. The ideas are there. But when one is proposed, an aide or two step forward to knock it down, or simply do nothing. Last August Bush read an editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* urging him to follow through on the Beck decision. He dispatched a memo to Roger Porter, then chief domestic policy adviser, asking why the White House hadn't acted. Nothing happened. But junior aides got wind of the memo, began working on a Beck order, Lefkowitz encountered Skinner, and you know the rest.

What befell the original text of Bush's education speech at Dieruff High School in Allentown, Pennsylvania, on April 16 is more typical. Speechwriter Dan McGroarty stuffed the text with strong language on school choice. It's a popular issue that differentiates Bush from Bill Clinton. Bush would give parents the choice of using a voucher to send their kids to public, private, or parochial schools. Clinton would let them choose only among public schools. Bush's toughest stand, however, was a promise to veto the education bill passed by Congress because it doesn't fund school choice programs. Or at least that was his strongest stand in the

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text that lasted until the night before the speech.

Education Secretary Lamar Alexander intervened. He is nominally a supporter of school choice, but you couldn't tell it from his lobbying of Henson Moore, the deputy White House chief of staff. Alexander wanted the emphasis on choice curbed, the mention of religious schools expunged. And the veto threat had to go. He succeeded on the veto. Bush wound up making this timid statement about the bill: "The time has come [for Congress] to get on board or get out of the way and stay behind. No more business as usual." That wasn't likely to frighten anyone on Capitol Hill.

Only a last-minute plea by Robert Teeter, Bush's campaign manager, kept the reference to religious schools in the speech. This is an important issue to Catholics and evangelical Protestants, both part of the Republican presidential coalition. "Every parent should have the power to choose which school is best for his child—public, private, or religious," Bush declared. He argued strenuously for choice, noting that college students who get federal aid can choose their school, even religious ones. "It's time we make the same choice available to all parents from the moment their children go to school," he said. But the support for school choice lacked the news peg that a veto threat would have given it.

Another problem was that Bush's senior aides decided to play up the part of the speech advocating the Lifelong Learning Act of 1992. This cravenly copied Clinton, who has been talking for months about providing more college loans, to be repaid over the recipient's lifetime. Bush's bill would give everyone a $25,000 lifetime line of credit, with the rate at which the money is paid back depending on a person's income. The trouble with emphasizing more money for student loans, a Bush aide said, is "it's their issue. Our issue is school choice. We can excite our people with our issue." But not with the Lifelong Learning Act.

One more story from the bureaucratic maw at the White House. Bush has tried to emerge this year as an agent of change. It's a hard sell. What's kept the effort alive is the passionate support of a group of young advisers at the re-election campaign (Jim Pinkerton, Jim Cicconi) and the White House (Lefkowitz, Charles Kolb, William Kristol). Pinkerton talked up welfare reform, and the result was a passage in the State of the Union address last January endorsing the idea. When Governor Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin asked for a federal waiver to permit a new program aimed at getting welfare recipients to work and marry, Kolb helped speed it through. Still, there were kvetchers. Clayton Yeutter, the new domestic policy czar, suggested that the White House wait for a bigger event than the Wisconsin waiver to play up welfare reform. He was overruled. Bush appeared at a press conference with Thompson and gave a radio address on welfare reform.

Again Skinner gets credit. He overruled Yeutter, figuring that if welfare reform is a good issue, why wait? To break the policy logjam, Skinner has reached out to junior aides. A few weeks after his arrival as chief of staff, Skinner showed up at the Friday morning policy breakfast that Kolb, Lefkowitz, and others hold at the White House mess. Skinner's predecessor, John Sununu, spurned the meeting until his last day at the White House, months after he'd stepped down as chief of staff. So for junior staffers an alliance with Sununu wasn't practical. With Skinner, it is. "Skinner is allowing people to get things moving," a junior aide says.

But, the 1992 election won't turn on small bore items like Bush's belated implementation of the Beck decision or approval of welfare innovations in Wisconsin. He needs to move on a big idea. He can't get his economic growth package through Congress. But there's another big idea afloat in the White House that junior House aides have looked into, and like. The president could veto the legislative branch appropriation ($2.3 billion in 1991) through which Congress funds itself. This was first proposed by Michael Horowitz, a Washington lawyer who worked in the Reagan White House, in a 1988 memo to the Bush campaign. The memo is circulating again this spring. More than 100 Republicans in the House, including GOP Whip Newt Gingrich, have urged a veto. Bush could say: "No funding for Congress until you pass a growth package for the American people that I can sign." Of course that would be demagogic and confrontational. But the veto would be popular, and might work to the president's advantage. Skinner, take note. •

New York vs. the '90s.

FASHION VICTIMS

By Meryl Gordon

It was just after 9 on a sunny Monday morning in New York when the first models began strolling down the runway at the Carolina Herrera fashion show, to the tune of "Unchain My Heart." This moment marked the unofficial opening of fashion week—the first of dozens of shows crammed into the next five days—and Herrera, a socialite who designs for the very rich, had attracted an SRO crowd of fashion arbiters from the glossy New York press. But something was amiss. When a model strutted by in a pair of iridescent black-and-white houndstooth sequined jeans, someone whispered, "Gross." Moments later, when the ultimate extravaganza was displayed—a blinding $15,000 diamond and emerald embroidered bolero jacket—the *Town and Country* reporter sitting next to me wrote in his notepad, "No! No! No!"

Throughout the week there were many bejeweled

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designer dresses by the likes of Herrera and Oscar de la Renta. But in this new age of austerity, the fashion mavens have determined that it's tacky to flaunt it. "The New York socialite with the big hair and the big ballgowns and the fifteen Sargents in the living room is a dinosaur," intoned Andre Leon Talley, the creative director of *Vogue*. "Society has deconstructed. The Babe Paley ballgown is not the look of the 1990s."

For most of us, of course, it was hardly the look of the 1980s, but such comments have a meaning all their own in the hermetic, frenetic world of New York fashion. Twice a year, thousands of buyers descend on Seventh Avenue for an immersion experience that has all the intensity and relationship to reality of a presidential race. It is, after all, a campaign, mounted by rival designers to define the zeitgeist of modern woman. Should she be all business in pin-striped menswear and tie (Ralph Lauren), wild as a jungle woman in zebra and leopard prints (Arnold Scaasi), a Woodstock wannabe in updated hiphuggers and fringe (Anna Sui), or a fashion rebel in a sweatshirt evening gown (Isaac Mizrahi)? For the fashion arbiters, who race all over town covering six or seven shows a day and try to remember who's pushing peplum vs. swallowtail jackets, the week is an endurance test. When several elevators stopped working at 550 Seventh Avenue on Wednesday, the crowd streaming out of the Ralph Lauren show on the third floor went into a panic about being late for Oscar de la Renta's show on the seventeenth floor. *Vogue* editor Anna Wintour threw herself into the last inch of space in the remaining elevator—and miraculously landed with her trademark sunglasses and every hair still in place.

Just three years ago, when Ivana ruled at the Plaza, top designers rented enormous ballrooms and packed them with socialites and celebrities. Now economic realities have prompted many designers to present the collections in their own office showrooms. The result, of course, is that the shows are now more exclusive than ever. Ralph Lauren's offices can hold only 175 people at a time. True, Oscar de la Renta did have an entire cheering squad of jewelry-laden air-kissing ladies at his collection, with Nancy Kissinger perched next to Barbara Walters. But in general, the Nan Kempner look-alikes didn't make the cut at most collections due to the space limitations.

Under their new budget constraints, most designers tried to come up with a memorable shtick to catch attention. At Donna Karan's presentation, the models, wearing silk lingerie, were sprawled suggestively in the middle of the floor before the show began, and guests had to step over the nearly naked bodies to get to their seats. For his grand finale, Arnold Scaasi replaced the usual blushing bride in a wedding gown with a vulgar Adam and Eve, complete with Adam in a zebra-striped loincloth. Cher's favorite designer, Bob Mackie, ignored the new austerity, and his typically lavish show was a Hollywood production number for the cold-weather months, including a randy Santa Claus peering down a model's plunging décolletage.

Even with the months of planning, coaching, and designing, events can go awry during fashion week. At 5 p.m. on Thursday, more than 800 people had jammed into a steaming warehouselike space in Greenwich Village for Isaac Mizrahi's show, but five models were missing in action, held up at another show uptown. Backstage Mizrahi paced nervously, urging everyone to use mental telepathy and "start channeling the models." Passing the time, Cindy Crawford, 26-year-old celebrity model and, surprisingly, resident fashion intellectual (she's married to Richard Gere), suggested to me that today's conservative clothes may reflect the change in sexual mores due to AIDS, and she misses the carefree fashion sensuality. "I just read this article about Camille Paglia," Crawford said, in which Paglia quoted a young woman as saying, "I've learned how to say no. I forgot how to say yes."

By now forty-five minutes had passed, and the crowd outside began stomping and yelling with annoyance—"What do I do?" wailed Mizrahi—and just then, the five AWOL models ran in, hair flying, heels clicking on the cement floor. Within a frantic five minutes, they were dressed and powdered, the music had started, and a conga line of models began dancing out to the runway, wearing coats with leather luggage handles stitched into the back and jackets with built-in purse pockets.

As I wandered through the crowd after Geoffrey Beene's show, the passions stirred by the cut of a skirt and the whimsy of a gauntlet-style glove were palpable. "It brings tears to my eyes, I can't believe he can do it," said one matron in a red-and-white polka dot dress. Elizabeth Tilberis, the new editor of *Harper's Bazaar*, pronounced: "Breathtakingly brilliant." "No one has a better sense of women's bodies," one woman gushed to her friend. Backstage, a weeping woman threw herself into Beene's arms, sobbing with reverence. Afterward the designer admitted he was pleased but stunned. "This is not a funeral," he said, "It's supposed to be joyous." He paused. "After all, it's only fashion."

MERYL GORDON is a New York writer.

ON THE HILL

FAIR TRADE FOLLIES

By James Bovard

"Fair trade" has long been a mantra in Congress. But there's nothing fair about the latest round of protectionist plans being laid on Capitol Hill. No import is too trivial, no restriction too draconian, no argument too shame-faced for some member of Congress to seize upon it as the basis for a new crusade against foreign imports.

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Last October Representative Leon Panetta of California proposed the "Fresh Cut Flower Import Regulation Act" to impose import quotas on daisies, roses, and other flowers. Panetta implied that Colombian flower growers, who have "a growing season that is ideal for production throughout the year," possess an "unfair competitive advantage" over American growers. His bill mandates that each imported flower have a label on its stem stating its country of origin. Panetta wants to "level the playing field" by imposing this absurd burden on foreigners.

Last June Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland introduced the "Shipbuilding and Repair Industry Free Trade Act," which would destroy free trade in shipping. Mikulski's bill would prohibit any foreign ship that was built with a subsidy to dock at a U.S. port without paying back the entire subsidy to the foreign government—or to the U.S. Coast Guard. Almost all merchant marine ships built in the United States have received massive federal subsidies—but they would not be affected by Mikulski's act.

Farm-state members of Congress complain that foreign governments act unfairly if they refuse to hog-tie their farmers. In September 1990 Senator Conrad Burns of Montana announced that foreign nations that "do not set aside [i.e., require farmers not to plant] acreage of a commodity when the United States has a set-aside" are guilty of "unfair trade practices." Now Representative Ron Marlenee, also of Montana, is preparing legislation to impose immediate import quotas or bans on agricultural imports from nations that do not have acreage reduction programs for crops that the United States does. Apparently every foreign nation is obliged to impose an agricultural policy at least as idiotic as U.S. policy.

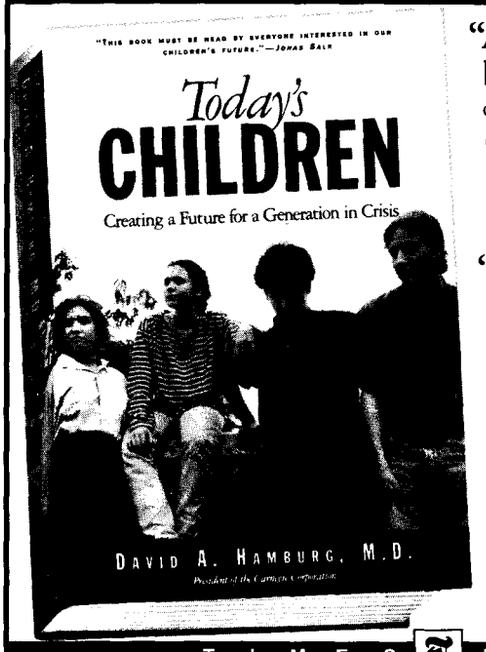
Last August New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato proposed the Job Fairness and Trade Equity Act—a pleasant-sounding bill that would raise the tariff on jeeps to 25 percent. D'Amato is outraged that the Treasury Department classifies jeeps as autos (with a 2.5 percent tariff) instead of as trucks (with a 25 percent duty). "Through the lower tariff [on jeeps] the United States is subsidizing and supporting auto manufacturers and workers in Japan at the expense of manufacturers and workers in the United States," D'Amato said. Refusing to impose punitive tariffs on a foreign producer is, to his mind, the equivalent of bankrolling foreigners.

Despite lofty rhetoric on Capitol Hill saluting Eastern Europeans for overthrowing their Communist governments, hysteria sometimes breaks out over the possibility of more imports from the ex-East bloc. Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania warned on February 25 that allowing duty-free entry of Goya cheese (a hard cheese not produced in the United States and sometimes used as a cheap substitute for Parmesan) from Hungary "would cause a tremendous increase of imports and devastate the domestic dairy industry." The truth is that if the Hungarians gave all the Goya cheese they produce to Americans for free, the impact on the U.S. dairy industry would be minuscule.

Ohio Representative Donald Pease proposed last November to ban the import of any manufactured item produced by children aged 14 or younger. Pease piously declared, "I am fervently opposed to the exploitation of children in the workplace," and noted that "adult workers in the United States should not have their jobs imperiled by imports produced by child labor in developing countries." But many African and Asian youth must either work or starve. And Pease's humanitarianism apparently does not extend to the hundreds of thousands of Americans aged 14 or younger who work in fast-food restaurants or as newspaper carriers.

The House majority leader, Richard Gephardt of Missouri, observed at a news conference on auto imports last December, "... no matter what the quality of your

"This book must be read by everyone interested in our children's future."
— JONAS SALK



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product, it's impossible to get your products into Japan." This is news to American pharmaceutical, computer, software, and medical equipment industries, who have helped boost American manufactured exports to Japan by more than 160 percent since 1985. By focusing myopically on the auto industry's problems, congressmen have sought to convince Americans that Japan is protectionist against all products—and thus create public support for retaliation against Japanese exports.

The common thread to most congressional trade proposals is contempt for American consumers. Senator Donald Riegle of Michigan, the ringleader of the Keating Five, is pushing a Trade Enhancement Act to create a so-called "Fair Trade Index" that would slash Japanese auto exports every month that the U.S.-Japan trade deficit did not decrease, as well as restrict the number of autos that Japanese factories in the United States could sell. At a January press conference, one journalist pressed Riegle about whether his proposal contained anything to protect American consumers against higher auto prices, and Riegle instantly degenerated into pure Bushism: "Well, this—this bill right now is aimed at the external problem. There's two problems here. There's the external problem, and there's the—and what we've got to do internally. But here's the bind we're in now: this problem has been let go so long, that if you don't confront the external problem, you're not going to have the strength to solve the internal problem. And this is what a lot of people haven't figured out yet. I mean, a lot of people are just tuning on this discussion as if the trade problem just, you know, started last week."

Members of Congress sometimes argue that high tariffs protect Americans against high prices. In a 1990 debate on footwear tariffs, South Carolina Senator Ernest Hollings warned, "It is our duty to maintain some market share and production capacity here in the United States.... This remaining 4 percent [of U.S. shoe production] is some constraint on runaway prices." Members keep shoe prices from "running away" by imposing on shoe imports tariffs as high as 67 percent.

Trade policy epitomizes the economic imperialism of Congress. Most trade bills assume that because someone is a congressman, he has a right to impose punitive taxes or prohibitions on what 250 million American citizens are allowed to buy and own. Because 90,000 people in eastern Ohio voted for some individual as the lesser of two evils on a rainy November day, that individual somehow acquires a right to restrict daisy imports, to penalize people for selling timber from their own property, or to disrupt international shipping. It's time for trade restrictions that make sense. How about a moratorium on the import of silly bills by members of Congress running for re-election?

JAMES BOVARD is the author of *The Fair Trade Fraud* (St. Martin's Press).

Moscow meets Capitol Hill.

KORRUPTSIA

By Daniel Treisman

MOSCOW

A bank director is appointed special assistant to the energy minister; a week later his bank announces it is going to invest 50 billion rubles in the oil industry. Another banker tells associates that, as an adviser to the Ministry of Industry, he can get preferential credit terms from the Central Bank. While firms struggle to lease offices in the city center, the business where the vice mayor's wife works somehow manages to obtain a prime spot in a desirable Moscow neighborhood.

Welcome to the world of *lobbirovaniye*, or as more cynical Muscovites know it, *korruptsia*. As democratic forms interweave with remnants of the Soviet state, a new brand of politics has been emerging in Russia. Disgraced officials from the old regime have become powers once again, thanks to their contacts and experience. And newly elected officials are finding that the boundary between legitimate forms of democratic pressure and the pursuit of corrupt advantage is porous indeed. "Buying these parliamentarians is very easy," says one Moscow journalist. "Most are from the intelligentsia, professionals used to earning a few hundred rubles a month. All you have to do is include them in a delegation on a trip abroad, or invite them to a banquet."

Under the old Communist order, bribes and connections were essential lubricants, providing access to scarce goods. That's still true, but today the stakes are higher, and the rules of play are much more fluid and difficult to divine. Some businessmen speak wistfully of the old days when each official knew his price, commensurate to his level on the administrative scale. Now, with inflation surging and all deals up for renegotiation, prices have gotten out of hand. Registering a business is said to cost 100,000 rubles. And there is no guarantee the bribed official will not have moved on to another post in a month's time.

As privatization picks up, 92 billion rubles of state property is supposed to be sold off this year. With all this at stake, it is a profitable time to have friends in the government. Take Valentin Pavlov, the former prime minister and August putschist. In most countries, participation in a coup would leave a shadow hanging over an executive's résumé. Not so in Russia. Last February Pavlov was offered a job as consultant to the country's largest commodity exchange and its associated empire of private companies. His answer: yes—as soon as cer-

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tain "legal and physical aspects" of his situation could be resolved. Pavlov is still in jail.

He isn't the only former Soviet official to have wormed his way into the new order. When the Soviet central ministries were closed down last fall in the aftermath of the failed coup, scores of senior managers, with decades of experience and phone books full of contacts, found themselves on the market. Many in effect took their ministries with them, transforming them into independent "corporations" and holding companies. The old Ministry of Shipbuilding Industry has metamorphosed into four "associations," six "concerns," one "corporation," and one department of the Russian Ministry of Industry. Other former bureaucrats turn up frequently on the boards of privatized companies.

Not surprisingly, the pioneers of private business feel at a disadvantage next to these insiders, and they have been organizing their own lobbying groups to help them compete. In the last few years entrepreneurial associations have sprung up almost as fast as companies themselves, as new laws have defined new forms of permissible enterprise. Already there are leagues of cooperatives, joint ventures, lease-holders, joint-stock companies, commercial banks, and commodity exchanges. With a combination of missionary zeal and the edginess of an embattled minority, their leaders use all means at their disposal to push projects past the bureaucracy. Techniques range from the innocent—hiring experts to draft proposed versions of laws and decrees—to the legally dubious. For a fee, many newspapers publish sympathetic interviews with key entrepreneurs or articles pleading their case. Lev Weinberg, president of the Association of Joint Ventures, says: "When I have some sort of weapons, I use them all."

In the new politics of influence, closeness to power can almost be read geographically from a Moscow street map. Lobbying centers on the imperial buildings of Staraya Ploshchad ("Old Square"), which used to be the headquarters of the Communist Party Central Committee. Many of the best-connected associations and businesses have offices in nearby stretches of the old Chinatown section. But Moscow's most formidable lobby is based on the square itself, the Russian League of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, which says its members produce 65 percent of the output of the former Soviet Union. Its president, Arkady Volsky, is so well connected he hardly had to move his office during the switch from communism to democracy. Just a few years ago, he sat a stone's throw away as head of the Party's industry department, coordinating Soviet production.

Just how does a Moscow lobbyist get his point across? For the uninitiated, here are the basic techniques.

Conventional bribery. For bureaucratic tasks such as registering a business, this remains the quickest method. Igor, a small-business man, says that in order to open a street-side kiosk he has to get approval from five different bodies: "the local prefecture, the city architect, the power utility, the hygiene inspectorate, and the fire brigade—so that if a fire starts they will put it out." Most of these require financial persuasion.

One of the most common forms of baksheesh is a share in the business itself. This gives the arrangement an impersonal appearance, and assures that the bribed official will retain an active interest in the venture. Other ways to disguise bribes are as honoraria for speaking at conferences or as fees for consultancy services. Some officials have outraged foreign journalists by demanding hefty hard-currency sums for providing information or interviews.

The old apparatchik connection. Successful companies often have at least one retired Soviet official among their directors. A former finance minister sits on the board of the Russian Exchange Bank, and a former vice premier heads an international investment fund. Such state-sector professionals act as a conduit of information from sources inside the government. Former apparatchiks can also help a businessman get access. (A crucial first step in most large private projects is a trip to the office of a high government official to get a signed document indicating general approval.)

The council. Entrepreneurial councils—or *soviety*—have been sprouting from state organs at all levels. There is one to advise Yeltsin, one under the Russian parliament, one under the Moscow mayoralty, and one under the Ministry of Industry. "RUSSIA AS BEFORE—LAND OF THE SOVIETS," joked a recent headline in the business weekly *Kommersant.* In theory, such councils offer a source of expertise for policymakers, who may not be informed about technicalities of deposit margins or futures trading. In practice, they formalize networks of influence that existed before and provide a legitimate forum for powerful businessmen to meet with top government officials. Membership is itself a result of lobbying, and the same individuals tend to turn up on councils at several different levels.

All of this should not suggest that Russia's nascent democratic institutions are drowning in corruption. In many cases there is genuine confusion about the distinction between fair and unfair influence. The Yeltsin government has tried to draw the line more clearly. One law passed a year ago forbids state officials from personally owning firms or conducting entrepreneurial activities. And just a few weeks ago Yeltsin signed a new anti-corruption decree defining further restrictions for government officials and set up a special "rapid reaction" group, directed by a crusading investigative journalist, to look into charges of corruption.

Jockeying for advantage is more open, competitive, and law-bound than under the Communist order, when political battles were fought out between cliques in the Party leadership. A few weeks ago Konstantin Borovoy, the director of the Russian Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange, accused the city government of Mayor

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Gavriil Popov of corruption in a series of real estate deals. Then he held a meeting on the steps of the mayoralty to call for Popov's resignation. At least today businessmen who feel left out of the division of spoils can appeal to the press and the public. It's progress, of a sort.

DANIEL TREISMAN is writing a book on the rebirth of private markets in Russia.

TEKNAF POSTCARD

BURMA SHAVE

By Susan Blaustein

The exodus of tens of thousands of persecuted Burmese Muslims into southeastern Bangladesh has entangled one of the world's most oppressed peoples with one of the world's poorest. Since mid-February refugees have been crowding onto weather-beaten fishing boats in Burma's western Arakan State and crossing the Naaf River at the rate of 5,000 a day into a region still recovering from the cyclone devastation of a year ago. The Rohingya Muslims tell of being conscripted by Burmese soldiers to carry heavy armaments through the jungle or to build roads, bridges, dams, and military encampments, and of being kicked and beaten with rifle butts if they stumbled or fell behind. Nurul Mohammad, a 30-year-old rickshaw driver from the village of Maungdaw, said troops broke into a mosque and beat him while he was praying. His young wife was dragged off by two other soldiers and raped at gunpoint, "one after one." Mohammad said bands of soldiers would routinely cart off cows, chickens, and rice from villagers' homes, beating anyone who tried to stop them. One time, he added, a group of soldiers carried off three women as well. Only one came back. Foreign observers monitoring the refugee situation believe that for every forty persons abducted or conscripted, five or six do not return.

Since Burma gained independence from Britain in 1948, Rangoon has carried out periodic waves of terror targeted at evicting Burma's Arakanese Muslim population. The central government has long survived, like the one in Baghdad, by brutally suppressing ethnic and religious minorities. This latest sweep, called "Operation Prosperous Land," began more than nine months ago as part of Rangoon's fiercest anti-insurgency campaign since 1988, when the military junta, called the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), seized power after strangling Burma's pro-democracy movement. The SLORC's 300,000-man military is currently engaged in a dry season offensive against the nineteen now-allied rebel forces arrayed along Burma's periphery.

SLORC officials insist that the refugees are recent illegal immigrants from Bangladesh who must be returned there, and that "the term Rohingya is fabricated." In fact, the name Rohingya is derived from Ruon, the ancient name of Arakan, which has been these Muslims' homeland since their Arab, Moorish, Mughal, and Bengali ancestors opened trading ports along the Arakanese coast in the seventh century. The refugees claim they can document their families' presence in Arakan as far back as 1784, when the then independent Muslim kingdom was conquered by Burmans.

Of the 300,000 Rohingyas who swarmed into Bangladesh in 1978 during the last such "operation," only half went home once General Ne Win, then Burma's despot, finally agreed to their repatriation. Many of them now find themselves fleeing Burma for a second time and swear they will never return. Bangladeshi soldiers here have on occasion refused to allow boats of refugees to disembark, sparking claims by international agencies that the government had sealed its border, which Dhaka has denied. However, the government in desperation has acknowledged handing over to Rangoon the names of some 167,000 Rohingyas now camped out near Teknaf, with the implied threat of repatriation.

The SLORC-run media denies that any rape, torture, or massacres of Rohingya Muslims have taken place. One official denounced the "illogical fabrications being spread by foreign radio and press" as "exaggerations and absolutely wrong"; another decried Dhaka's "cunning and crafty" attempt to "obtain millions of dollars" in foreign aid "by spinning yarns." "It's like Hans Christian Andersen," exclaimed an elderly Buddhist nun. "Every day they tell us it's not true, that four people just fell into the river of their own accord. Being a religious woman, I'm not supposed to take sides. But don't you think it's an insult, as though we were fools and couldn't understand anything?"

For most Burmese, life is already difficult enough without taking up the gauntlet for the Rohingyas, who, even among Burma's 6.4 million Muslims, constitute a remote minority. The Sunni, Shiite, Pakistani, and Bengali Muslims in Rangoon are more concerned about the skyrocketing prices of rice and cooking oil, and they are incensed at the SLORC's latest threat to relocate their cemetery out of town, which would mean digging up their dead, contrary to Islamic practice, at their own expense. Burmese Buddhists have never shown much empathy for the Muslim population. As one Burmese Buddhist lawyer in Rangoon put it, "Inflation is very great, and the people are very poor and hungry and angry. That's why they create a rift between the Muslims and the Buddhists, to shift the target from themselves to the Muslim Burmese." With few Burmese earning a living wage, the SLORC's military intelligence network can easily monitor every block and government office by hiring informers at roughly a dollar a day. Hundreds of students are still in jail for having held peaceful demonstrations last December to protest the detention of oppo-

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sition leader Aung San Suu Kyi; their parents are under surveillance as well. The university remains closed while all faculty members are being farmed out in shifts to remote military boot camps for re-education.

The chief underwriter of this police state is China, with whom official and black market trade comes to more than half a billion dollars a year. (In comparison, total American trade with and private investment in Burma amounts to about $175 million.) Within the last two years China has furnished the SLORC with at least another half billion dollars' worth of jet fighter aircraft, tanks, patrol boats, anti-aircraft weapons, rocket launchers, and other arms used by the SLORC to pummel the ethnic minorities.

The SLORC also possesses a variety of European arms (though arms sales are now suspended under an EC arms embargo). Swiss aircraft were adapted for combat use, and Belgian, British, Dutch, German, and Italian arms managed to reach Burma via Singaporean ships. Swedish-patented, Singapore-built 84mm "Carl Gustaf" rockets are still being fired into Karen territory near the Thai border. The SLORC has reportedly raised the cash for all this by pawning Burma's gold, hardwood, mineral, and fishing reserves to its neighbors. Diplomats believe that with this hand-to-armament strategy, the SLORC can tough it out until at least the end of the century.

Thus far the White House has kept silent about the abuses against the Rohingyas—and has taken a low-keyed stance against Burma's government as a whole, leaving the staunchest condemnations of the Rohingyas persecution to the governments of Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The outcry from the Rohingyas' Islamic brethren has embarrassed even Burma's non-Muslim Southeast Asian neighbors, Thailand and Singapore, into public criticism of the SLORC's brutality. Until now, both countries have followed a policy of constructive engagement with Burma, their major supplier of teak, jade, and gems. The White House, however, is predictably loath to offend China by tackling its client-state in Rangoon. As one high-ranking State Department official puts it, "Burma is just a postscript to the whole Chinese relationship."

Meanwhile, the agony along Burma's border continues. Unlike many of his countrymen now huddled in makeshift shacks along the Arakan Road in Bangladesh, 68-year-old Anowa Meha wants to go home. Squatting barefoot on the muddy Naaf riverbank after stepping off the rickety wooden fishing vessel that had ferried him to safety, he laments being forced to abandon his home: "It was the house of my father and my grandfather.... When my country is peaceful and independent, and when the soldiers of the military junta stop torturing us, we will go back." Asked when he thought those things might come to pass, the old man thought for a moment. "I will die here," he said.

SUSAN BLAUSTEIN is a free-lance writer living in Southeast Asia.

Black Catholics in a white Church.

HANGIN' WITH THE ROMEBOYS

By Paul Elie

It was a conflict worthy of a Spike Lee movie: the hottest topic in American society—race—pressed upon the Church that most often finds itself in political heat. So when George Augustus Stallings broke with Rome three summers ago, all the world came calling. The world has since lost interest, but the conflict between black Catholics and a white Church still simmers. The questions being raised by blacks within the American Catholic Church—Eurocentrism or multiculturalism? assimilation or separatism?—are those resounding within American culture as a whole.

Stallings is the former Roman Catholic priest who in July 1989 founded the African American Catholic Congregation (a.k.a. Imani Temple). His subsequent suspension from priestly duties by the Washington archdiocese was the climax of a five-year clash during which as pastor of St. Teresa's parish and archdiocese director of evangelism, he had conducted liturgies that borrowed liberally from African, black American, and Catholic religious traditions. In 1990, when he declared his congregation fully independent of the Church, he was excommunicated. Stallings's prediction that his founding of Imani Temple would prompt large numbers of black Catholics to defect with him has, however, proved false, and the testimony against him during the controversy—from *The Washington Post*'s claims (which he denied) that he had had sex with altar boys to the ethics of his sumptuous "Augustus Manor" in Southeast

PAUL ELIE writes for *Commonweal* and *Lingua Franca*.

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D.C., possibly renovated with parish funds—undermined his credibility as an Afro-Catholic Moses, leading a people out of the Roman wilderness. But during his nine months of notoriety, from "60 Minutes" to "Donahue," he spread his gospel: that the Church, like America, is a racist, Eurocentric yoke around the necks of black Americans.

It didn't catch on. Perhaps the biggest surprise of the controversy is that, by and large, black Catholics have remained in the Church even as they have felt the sting of racism, the desire for a truly Afro-Catholic culture, and the need for more black voices within the Church—the very grievances promoted by Stallings. The next stage of this internal debate will be the seventh National Black Catholic Congress in New Orleans in July, where some 4,000 delegates will bring their faith to bear on the crises in black America, and on the black family in particular.

The Stallings controversy reflected, in extremis, a paradox familiar in society as a whole: as black Catholics have gained ground in the Church, they have also felt increasingly fragmented and isolated. From African-rooted liturgies to inner-city activism, black Catholics' contributions to the Church are ever more tangible and distinctive. The numbers of black Catholics are growing: four years after a survey by the Josephite religious order found 990,000 African Americans in the 52-million-member American Church, a Gallup Poll found 2 million. Yet black Catholics increasingly feel that they remain what the religious historian Albert Raboteau calls "a minority within a minority" among blacks and an anomaly among Catholics. So acute is their sense of apartness in the Church that black Catholic leaders have called for a new canonical rite—a separate Church for black Catholics, in communion with Rome but independent of it. If the Stallings debacle was a Spike-like melodrama, the separate-rite discussions promise to be a PBS miniseries: drawn-out, temperate, alternately chastising and kissing up to key constituencies.

Even as they consider separation, black Catholics are still Roman Catholics—and have a long, intricate history within the American Church. Much of it, of course, is one of racial oppression. The first black slave on American soil was Catholic. Although some free black Catholics played key roles in the antebellum Church (such as Pierre Toussaint, a freed slave from Haiti whose almsgiving in mid-nineteenth-century New York was legendary), for most black Catholics of this period—100,000 in the South alone in 1860, by one estimate—religion was bound up with slavery, as Church leaders equivocated on the issue or backed slavery as a means of converting blacks.

The fact that so many slaves remained within the Church is a stunning testimony to their own faith—a faith grounded, ironically, in the Romish aspects of Catholicism that the Church's white opponents reviled. Slaves found Catholicism's incense, relics, libations, and feast days to be "more akin to the spirit of African piety than [was] the sparseness of Puritan America," according to Raboteau. He also holds that black Catholics took solace in the doctrine that the sacraments are efficacious regardless of the moral character of the priest who performs them; thus a single priest's bigotry does not invalidate his consecration of the Eucharist. Blacks responded to Catholicism's internationalism, its black saints, its claims to be a Church for all peoples. Over time, Church historian Cyprian Davis contends, they developed a distinctive sensibility, grounded in the "twin characteristics of strong Catholic loyalty and denunciation of Christian injustice." It is an interesting forerunner of the strategies for involvement in the Church that many alienated women and homosexuals live by today.

For a long while, their efforts were to no avail. In North and South alike, blacks were consigned to the side areas or balconies of Catholic churches or were turned away altogether, and they were refused entry into Catholic schools until the mid-twentieth century; meanwhile, non-Catholic blacks considered them Uncle Toms for being Catholic. Whereas white Catholic men could join religious orders dedicated to serving "the colored mission," black men were strongly discouraged from becoming priests at all.

Consequently, the black laity was the most important force in racial progress within the Church, and was instrumental in the Church's advocacy of blacks' civil rights. In the 1890s the journalist Daniel Rudd organized five congresses for black Catholics; a generation later, Howard professor Thomas Wyatt Turner founded the Committee for the Advancement of Colored Catholics, which held a national conference in 1924. Not only are those sessions the symbolic touchstones for the current "congress movement," but the themes voiced there were matched, point for point, by those of the 1987 congress: the right to employment and education opportunities, the central role of the family, the need for more black priests, the problem of racism, and the vision of a Church that "preaches one origin for all mankind, and therefore, [that] all are brothers and sisters."

A century after the first black Catholic congresses, one can see previous generations of black Catholics—with their stress on lay activism, their faithful dissent, and their willingness to hold fast to a Church not made in their image—as the predecessors of post-Vatican II American Catholics generally. And one can see black Catholics as having ever greater chances to claim their inheritance. Today there are some 300 black priests and eleven black bishops; 100 bishops will be at black Catholic congress. The New York archdiocese recently sent to Rome the case for the beatification of Pierre Toussaint, a step away from sainthood.

An especially heartening development is black parishes' response to the Second Vatican Council's call for "liturgical inculturation," which aims to make the liturgy reflect the shared culture of the parishioners.

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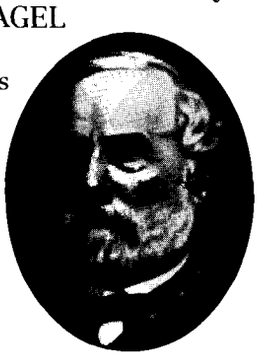

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Whereas many white parishes have established dubiously modern and excruciating "folk masses," black parishes have tapped into genuine African and black Protestant traditions. On 141st Street in Harlem, members of the St. Charles Borromeo parish celebrate mass with a gospel choir in a church recently remodeled to feature a new Lucite altar honoring black saints and a large baptistry that allows for baptisms done by immersion, according to ancient North African Christian tradition. At Our Holy Name on West 96th Street, Haitian-born Catholics attend mass said in Creole. This kind of inculturation has been used by the Catholic Church for centuries throughout the world. Black Catholics' adoption of it in America is not a break with tradition, but a renewal of it.

But the volatile issues of affirmative action, racial quotas, and racial tension are not easily dispelled by liturgical experiments. Although Catholic schools have been praised for their success in educating inner-city children, recent closings and consolidations have hurt. There are everyday racial rifts: St. Joseph's, for example, balances black and Hispanic traditions, while some of its parishioners long for pre-Vatican II devotions.

Among the clergy tensions are rising. The 300 black priests are just a smattering of the roughly 57,000 Catholic priests in the United States, and far too few to staff the 1,100 mostly black parishes. About half of the black priests work in parishes; of these, sixty are pastors of chiefly black parishes, which means that about 1,040 mainly black parishes are led by white priests. Because priesthood is a lifetime commitment requiring poverty, chastity, and obedience, the Church cannot attract black priests simply by promising swift promotions and corner offices; and in trying to redress racial imbalances by appointing black priests to black parishes, bishops invite the charge that they are ghettoizing black clergy. "It seems strange to me that the Church can't put a black priest in a prominent place unless it has to do with black concerns," says Donald Sterling, president of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus. Lawrence E. Lucas, pastor of the Resurrection Church in Harlem, observes that assigning black priests to black parishes doesn't necessarily turn them into genuine community leaders: "I know some black priests right here in Harlem who wouldn't be recognized if they walked down their own street." Raymond Kemp, the white pastor of Holy Comforter-St. Cyprian, a largely black D.C. parish, says: "The Church is still stuck using its talented black clergy to be symbolic presences in places where people expect to find a black person—so much so that there has been no thought given to blacks leading predominantly white parishes."

The same sorts of dilemmas arise when it comes to making black clergymen bishops, as the already arbitrary selection process—bishops are chosen in large measure for their obedience to the Roman curia—is further complicated by race. The death last year of the first black bishop, Harold Perry, and the 1990 resignation of the first black archbishop, Eugene Marino—after it was revealed that he'd had an affair with a woman parishioner—have left eleven black bishops, all but two of whom are auxiliary bishops serving under white bishops in dioceses with large black populations. "There were only thirteen, and now there are only eleven," says Father Sterling. "And I've heard it said that 'That's just the right percentage.' What's the use of that kind of thinking? That's nothing but a statistics-based affirmative action program. What we need is not the right percentage, but the right people." Father Lucas says, "The black bishops are silent and useless." Father Kemp says, "A number of the black bishops are symbols—spooks who sit by the door."

Into this delicate situation came George Stallings. "The Church has attempted to placate African Americans through empty gestures, sham efforts, noisy gong-clanging, full of sound and fury but signifying nothing," he says. "The appointments of black bishops? They're teasers and pacifiers—and when it comes to the black community, the Roman Church is the biggest baby-pacifier in the world." Two years after excommunication, Stallings is still obsessed with the Church's "racism." He claims recent school closings reveal the Church's plans to "extinguish" its schools in the inner cities. He contends that his break with the Church led it to "rush to appoint more black pastors" out of solicitude to black parishes, and at the same time to hold off from appointing more black bishops, who might fan the flames of racial conflict. "We've put the racism within the Roman Catholic Church on the front page," he proclaims, "especially as expressed through the white, male, racist, sexist hierarchy." Stallings says he wants to make the AACC an Afro-Catholic analogue to Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam, urging blacks to take political and economic control of their own lives. Citing the theory of a few Afrocentrists that Jesus was an Ethiopian Jew, he says that one day soon he and his followers will destroy "every image of a white Jesus we can find."

Meanwhile, however, the growth of Stallings's own African American Catholic Congregation has ground to a halt. In 1990, in accord with the traditional doctrine that bishops must be ordained by other bishops, Stallings was ordained an archbishop by Richard Bridges of the Independent Old Catholic Church, a small breakaway sect. Soon after, though, he and Bridges fell out in sectarian squabbles. Priests have joined the AACC and then left it, with one departing for Bridges's church on the day of his ordination. Stallings's attendance at former D.C. Mayor Marion Barry's drug trial—he and Farrakhan were banned, then allowed to attend after the ACLU won an appeal on their behalf—showed how political his religious agenda is. Nine AACC temples have opened in six cities; three have since closed. Today the movement claims some 3,800 members, about as many as attended its services in Washington during Stallings's long hot summer of fame.

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Last September Archbishop Stallings ordained as a priest Rose Marie Vernell, a one-time Roman Catholic nun and charity worker who joined the AACC soon after it was established as an independent congregation. Her installation as pastor of the Imani Temple in West Philadelphia one Sunday last December was a dramatic affair. Congregants arriving at the site of the Temple—a former Methodist church with a large FOR RENT sign posted outside—stepped past cameras and cables laid in for a TV documentary produced by Stallings's publicist and waited an hour past the announced time.

Despite the large choirs, drumming, clapping, and shouts of affirmation, the service (attended by about 150) was surprisingly conservative. Though the second of three readings was drawn not from the New Testament but from the *Book of Prayer and Sacred Praises* (an African text so obscure that, when asked to identify it, an Imani priest drew a blank), the liturgy's structure was similar to that of most Christian churches. The congregants' interjections, common to black Protestant churches, had the quivery tentativeness for which Catholics are known. Archbishop Stallings sat enthroned in the center aisle, garbed in vestments recalling the medieval Church whose traditions he has largely jettisoned. Only when he rose to proclaim the historic character of the ordination did he display the rhetorical zeal he had shown Phil Donahue.

Stallings's view of the Church's racism is not restricted to his excommunicated sect. Many in the Church sound equally radical. The most vocal of these is Lawrence Lucas, pastor of the Resurrection Church in Harlem—and brother of William Lucas, the Bush administration's ill-fated appointee as civil rights czar. When speaking out on civic issues, Lucas is given to reflexive conspiracy-mongering. But when he speaks on religious matters, he sounds far more moderate: the inverse of the radical-conservative mix one finds in the most famous black ex-Catholic of all, Justice Thomas. Lucas's 1970 book *Black Priest/White Church* builds to the inevitable question: How can he regard the Church as a "white supremacist" institution and yet remain a priest in it? His answer: "I still believe ... that the Church is divine *and* human, a free and responsible community of faith, hope, and charity...." Twenty-two years later, after the appointments of twelve black bishops, the establishment of a national black Catholic congress, and the issuance of three Church pastoral letters about racism, Lucas remains convinced that his Church is a white supremacist institution. "Racism in the Church has gotten worse by degree," he said recently. "But I remind myself that the *Lord* is my master."

PHOTO BY JIM HOLLOWAY FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

For younger black Catholics, gospel faith such as Father Lucas's may be difficult to summon. That's one of the reasons why the demands for a new canonical rite are growing stronger. Papal approval of such a rite—seventeen others are recognized—would establish an African-American Catholic denomination, with its own liturgy, canon law, and clergy. There are precedents: Pope John Paul II approved a Rite of Zaire in 1988, and a rite for some 60 million Afro-Brazilian Catholics is being processed in Rome.

But what's interesting in all these debates within the Church is that, unlike society as a whole, there seems to be a consensus for some moderate solution. The separate rite will be "studied" for years, not adopted impulsively, a plan favored by most black Catholics, not just the hierarchy. There are worries that "resegregating" the Church would be economically foolish for parishes and would tax the energies of black Catholic priests, already too few. There is also the fact of black Catholics' long history of loyalty to the Church. The current strains do not

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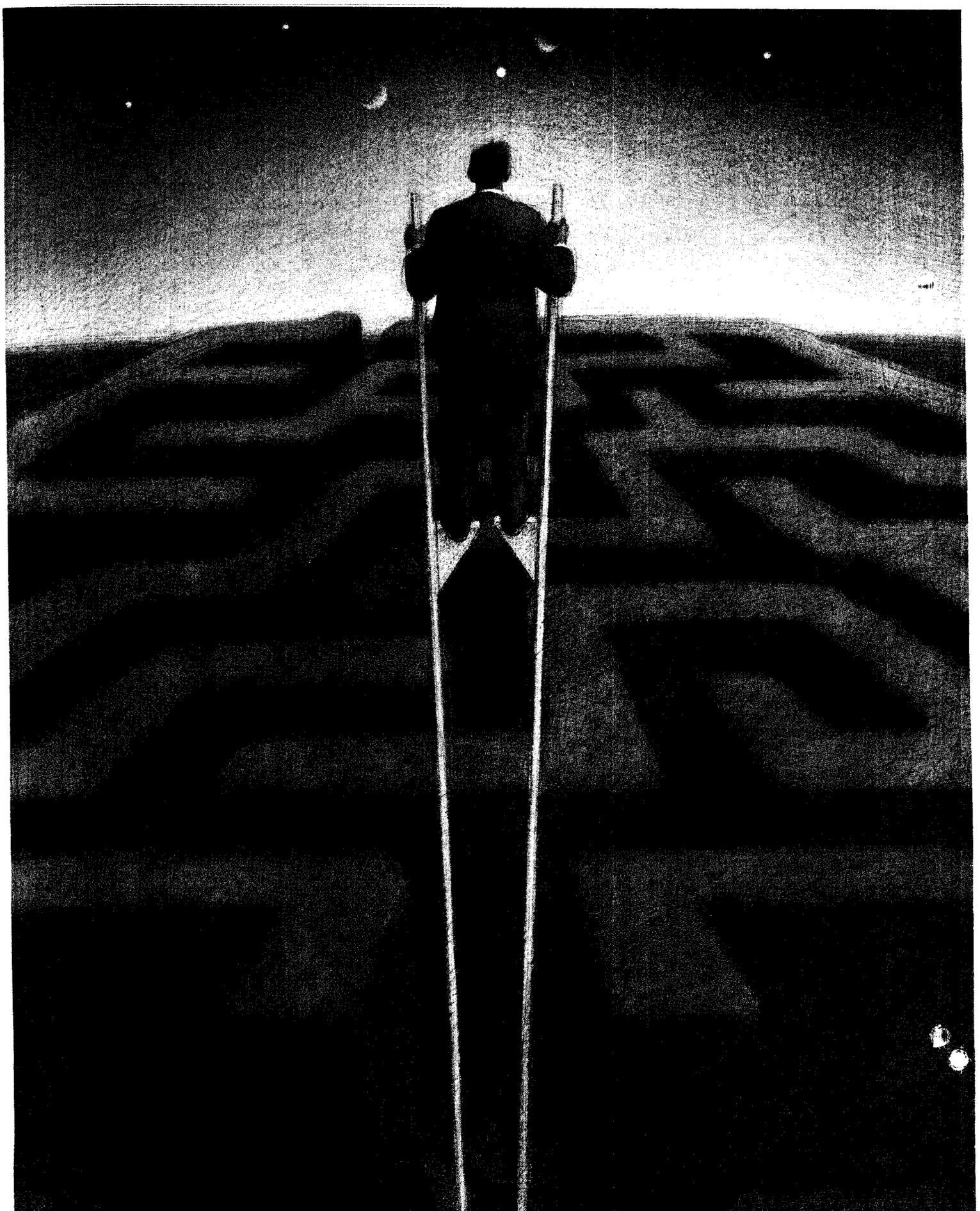

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approximate the agony of slavery or segregation, and a new separatism is widely perceived as a betrayal of the black Catholic tradition rather than its culmination. Stallings's crusade has turned out to be a quixotic venture into the desert.

Supporters of the separate rite note that if today's 2 million African-American Catholics were all members of the new group, it would be the second-largest black church in the United States (after the Baptists). And they point out that black Catholics might be better off moving freely in the margins than intransigently staying in the Roman Catholic center. It can be argued, too, that marginality itself is a strength, not a weakness. In 1988 Father Lucas contended that the Church should keep a more critical distance from society. Why should the Church be introducing its members into the mainstream of American life? he asked. "Rather, ought it not to be introducing people into the mainstream of the Gospel life?"

On some level, most people in the Church would say yes. The religious approach to race is not the secular one; and the Catholic approach is not the American. But the harder question—how?—remains, as black Catholics weigh the value of prophetic distance against that of further assimilation. It is a dilemma with ample precedents in black Catholics' history—and in the history of American Catholics as a whole, who only a generation ago were confined to what was called "the Catholic ghetto." Black Catholics' efforts show, perhaps, that it can be fruitful to work within even the most intransigent of systems. In the Church, despite injustice, generations of blacks have found religious succor and moved toward the American mainstream, and black Catholics' post-Vatican II achievements show that stream to be unexpectedly wide and deep. It would be a great loss to the American Catholic Church—and to American society as a whole—if that stream were suddenly to narrow. •

Why I stopped editing 'Marxism Today.'

RED RAG

By Martin Jacques

Let me start with a warning: what I am about to tell you is a little farfetched, for a British audience, let alone an American one. What follows may stretch your credulity, but bear with me because it really happened: this, as they say, is a True Story.

Let me begin with a little memoir. My parents were Communists. I joined the Young Communist League in the early 1960s as a teenager. Until 1968 I was a pretty orthodox Communist. Then came 1968: the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the May events in France when millions of workers went on strike, and student militancy. It was a turning point in my life. I discovered Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist, in late 1968 while working on my doctorate at Cambridge University. It opened a new intellectual world for me. I broke with conventional Marxism, with the idea that the Communist countries offered anything. Preoccupied with democracy and the Western liberal tradition, I became what was known as a Eurocommunist. But this search for new bearings took place in a peculiar straitjacket. In 1967 I had been elected to the executive (equivalent of central) committee of the CP. I decided to remain a member, even though I sometimes felt as if I lived on another planet.

The 1970s were a turbulent period in British politics, with runaway inflation and serious doubts that the country was governable at all. There was an enormous revival of old-style class militancy. For a while it looked as if the clock had been turned back to the 1920s, which had seen the birth of modern class politics in the U.K. In fact something much more profound was happening. The postwar era was breaking up, and the 1970s simply marked the transition to a new order.

Meanwhile my personal odyssey had become a more collective enterprise. A whole generation of post-1968 young intellectuals was on the move, frustrated with the old left nostrums. It gravitated toward an annual institution with the unlikely name of the Communist University. This was a week-long jamboree attracting several thousand people, which was characterized by enormous intellectual energy and promiscuity, a kind of dissenting academy of the left. Here you could hear every sacred cow of the left under assault. The irreverence was extraordinary. Out went Lenin, revolution, class; in came democracy, culture, feminism.

By this time I was a historian at Bristol University and still a member of the CP executive committee. In 1977 I

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was asked to become the editor of *Marxism Today*, a very boring monthly journal produced by the CP for its more intellectual types. I wasn't in the least bit interested in editing *MT*—or in journalism, for that matter—but I was very interested in making the CP a seriously Eurocommunist organization. I pondered, agonized, and agreed. I started my job as a full-time editor working at the CP HQ in London and was made a member of the CP's political committee. There followed some of the most miserable months of my life. I hated my existence in the upper echelons of the CP; it was dominated by old men, and there was no room for an iconoclast like me, who hated the Communist countries, didn't believe in the old mythology of the working class, and wanted to understand the rise of the radical right. As I spoke on the issues of the day, I felt my words falling on stony ears. One of the least noticed aspects of communism's crisis everywhere has been its inability to cope with generational change.

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THE FINAL ISSUE OF *MARXISM TODAY*, DECEMBER 1991

In the face of this Berlin Wall of indifference, I slowly began to seek solace in *Marxism Today*. The problem was I just didn't like what it was. The magazine was in the classic Stalinist mold: obscure articles by Marxist intellectuals about the dialectics of nature, boring pieces by Communist notables on the virtues of socialism, and a few interesting articles by young intellectuals imbued by the spirit of 1968 but written in an impenetrable style. There was another problem: I was the only member on staff.

But slowly I developed an idea of what it might be: a political monthly with a reflective style concentrating on topical issues. The Marxism in the title was to be ignored, except insofar as the magazine would recognize the importance of ideas and the interconnectedness of things. There were to be two kinds of writers: journalists, who had to be persuaded to write in a more intellectually structured fashion, and academics, who had to be inveigled to be more accessible. In other words, we had to invent a new style of writing. The inspiration, ironically, was the *Financial Times*, which I had admired greatly since the early 1970s.

But what of the politics? The origins were in that dissenting academy of the Communist University. The magazine would continue criticizing left thinking, rejecting certainties, taking nothing on trust: the very antithesis of what the socialist tradition had become. It would be pluralistic, iconoclastic, unpredictable. And all this happened at a fascinating moment in British politics. The '70s were drawing to a close. Margaret Thatcher was still a maverick leader of the opposition Tory Party. The breakup of the postwar era was about to be replaced by something new; the U.K. about to become a global laboratory. We watched.

Two fundamental propositions informed the magazine. The first was that the mushrooming class militancy of the '70s did not represent some great revival of the left. Rather, it was a false dawn: the resurgence of an old class politics marked the end of something rather than the beginning. The other proposition was that the rise of Thatcher and her like represented a quite new phenomenon on the right. Indeed, the word Thatcherism, believe it or not, was first used in an article in *Marxism Today*—in January 1979, some months before she was elected prime minister. Both of these propositions were heresies on the left at the time, *MT* virtually a lone voice.

We redesigned the magazine, introduced graphics, and in 1981 made it available at newsstands. Sales leapt from 3,000 to 9,000. The staff grew to three, then four. At the same time the Labour Party entered into a convulsive period of internal division. Defeated in the 1979 general election after holding office for eleven of the previous fifteen years, it turned left. The defeat was blamed on the failure of the Labour government to introduce a more full-blooded state-led national economic policy. The class militancy of the '70s now found expression in the policies and rhetoric of Labour. But

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in 1983 the Labour Party suffered a massive defeat at the hands of Mrs. Thatcher in the general election. Neil Kinnock was elected leader, and the party began to shift rightward and to break with the shibboleths of the left.

This shift—and the magazine's role in it—prompted a bitter assault on the magazine by hard-liners in the Communist Party who saw it, quite rightly, as anathema. In 1981 they tried to kill *MT*, and very nearly succeeded by mustering support on the CP's executive committee. The fact that they failed was not because *MT*'s supporters in the CP were highly numerous (they weren't). Rather, the middle ground recognized that to kill *MT* would incur a great deal of opprobrium on the left. What's more, by that time it was about the only successful thing the CP was doing. They wanted, vicariously, to share in that success. But the divisions over *MT* were symptomatic of a much deeper philosophical chasm. From that moment, the CP was effectively listing badly and holed beneath the waterline. It took the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe to deliver the final coup de grace.

By the mid-'80s *Marxism Today* started to run out of steam. The heresies it had been associated with—the innovation of Thatcherism, the decline of the left, the bankruptcy of much socialist thought—had by now become the new orthodoxy on the left. It was time to move on. But to what? We had only the vaguest of ideas. The turning point came in May 1988. Thirty-five of us from academia, politics, and journalism spent the weekend staying at a beautiful country house, the irony of which was not lost on our critics. The weekend was a curate's egg—some good, some bad. There was a great deal of underlying tension associated with gender. Some of the sessions were not up to much. But irresistibly a new agenda or—better perhaps—a new way of describing the world began to emerge.

The argument can be put as follows: the old world of mass production is breaking down and being replaced by flexible production and segmented markets. The consumer enjoys a quite new power. Society is becoming more and more heterogeneous. A multiplicity of identities has replaced the centrality of the old class dynamic. Meanwhile, globalization is eating away at the old nation-state. This is a crude version of the argument that, in *Marxism Today*, was described simply as "New Times." There was also a contemporary political point. The left had confused New Times and Mrs. Thatcher; it had failed to comprehend the nature of the changes. Part of the success of Mrs. Thatcher was because she had clocked them. In dismissing Thatcherism the left was tending to reject New Times, and thereby render itself historically redundant.

The New Times argument was carried in autumn 1988 in a special issue and was greeted with much debate across the political spectrum. It stood in contrast to the dull policy review published by the Labour Party several months before. It represented a renewed surge of energy for the magazine. But it also marked a major point of departure. Previously, *MT*'s innovations had been within a clearly identifiable left tradition. The New Times analysis broke with that context: it represented a casting off of the ideological anchor. Suddenly the magazine's title began to feel even more of a problem. Although by now only 10 percent of the readership was in the CP, a large majority was on the left. The New Times analysis suggested a much broader readership: but the title and the association with the CP made this impossible beyond a point.

New Times lived for a year. The magazine's sales reached 17,000 (compared with 20,000 for the *New Statesman*). Then, in June 1989, came Tiananmen Square and, in the autumn, the collapse of Eastern Europe. Communism was over. To be honest, no one who knew the magazine had associated *MT* with the Communist countries before 1989. The magazine's anti-Stalinist record was unimpeachable. In 1982, when the hard-liners in the CP had tried to kill off *MT*, their contacts in the Kremlin gave them a helping hand. They sent a letter of protest to the British CP about an article in *MT* by the well-known dissident (as he was then) Roy Medvedev (except some stupid pen-pusher in the Kremlin confused Roy with his brother Zhores ... no wonder they couldn't organize a coup).

But in 1989 the magazine's title became a nightmare. For Marxism Today Take Two, the title had always been a misnomer, but one we had previously been able to get away with. Indeed, those in the know, on left and right alike, saw the title as some kind of ironic joke: "the only Marxism in it is in the title" was a frequent jest. But after 1989 it became unsustainable.

In December 1991 we produced our last issue in a blaze of glory (and with a little money still left in the bank). The tributes were voluminous and generous. Virtually every political commentator—from Hugo Young to Neal Anderson and Peter Jenkins—devoted a column to the strange phenomenon. Now I am glad it is all over. Fourteen years in any job is a long time, especially one as back-breaking as this. But the magazine also outgrew its origins. I became tired of answering all those questions: Are you still a Marxist? My mind was somewhere else, and somehow my identity was frozen in the past. It was time for a new project and an identity that reflected where I now was, rather than one thrust upon me by those who chose the title of the magazine when it first appeared in 1957.

With the result of the U.K. election now ringing in my ears, I am reminded how profound the propositions advanced by the magazine have proved to be; how what was deemed radical was in retrospect the least that could have been said. We argued that Thatcherism was a great turning point, that Labour's renewal under Kinnock didn't go far enough, that one-party government could become a reality. All these have turned out to be correct. We also argued that the left as we had known it was essentially over. I knew we were correct at the time: but even I underestimated the endurance of our arguments. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Assumptions

Satyajit Ray makes an assumption about his viewers. He assumes that they can be interested in a film that simply dwells with its characters, rather than one that imposes dramatic patterns on their lives. Part of his assumption rests on a common culture with his immediate public. ("All my films are made with my own Bengali audience in view," he has said.) But by now, after nearly forty years of filmmaking and more than thirty films, he knows that his work touches other viewers as well, that, by being faithfully Bengali, he can also reach other sorts of people. His films are one more example of the truism that the road to universality starts in a particularized place.

This is a far cry from saying that Ray's films are international smasheroos. (They aren't even national smasheroos: only 55 million of India's 840 million speak Bengali.) At home, in West Bengal, the films cut across several social strata; abroad they are epicurean. The critic Rustom Bharucha, himself Calcuttan but writing in America, said, "If one had to select an essentially cinematic quality that epitomizes Ray's films, it would be his acute awareness of the minuscule," which limits their occidental appeal.

Sometimes Ray can carry this minuscular quality so far that his films become not daintily precious but almost busily bland, as if the camera had been stuck through a window somewhat in Andy Warhol fashion to record undifferentiated dailiness. But at his best, as in the Apu trilogy and *Charulata* and *The Chess Players*, Ray creates a tension between our general expectations of film and his refusal to fulfill those expectations, thus showing—proving—that film can be and do more.

One of his latest films to reach us, **Branches of the Tree** (Erato), restates that quiet proposition quietly. (The film had its New York premiere at the Walter Reade Theater in Lincoln Center, hoping for further release.) The new film is above the middle level of Ray's work, not in the class of the titles above but a gratifying experience for Blakean world-in-a-grain-of-sand people. A much-respected Bengali man, prosperous and public-minded, is given a celebration for his 70th birthday at which he has a heart attack. One of his sons, whose mind was unsettled in an auto accident, lives with the father but is unable to comprehend what has happened. The man's three other sons hurry from their fairly distant homes, with their families, to be near him. In the week of his recuperation, we grow to know these sons and perceive the moral spectrum that they and their wives encompass. That is all.

The father has always said there is white money and black money; we find out which of the sons has opted for which. The presence in the house of the father's father, aged 93, and of a child helps to give us a sense of the line in which these ethical questions are set, and the mentally incompetent son supplies a kind of null amorality. (One of the sons has been so revolted by the peculations of his employer that he has quit his job to enter a purer world, the theater. Evidently purity, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.)

Almost all of the film takes place indoors, in the ill man's house. The camera opens on a huge flower arrangement in the middle of a drawing-room table, then concentrates on the paterfamilias and his afflicted son. A servant comes in to clear things and leaves, walking past the camera with seeming disregard of his place in focus. When Ray is operating at his most astute, as he is here, he is trying to controvert the Heisenberg principle: these people are observed without disturbing the order of their lives. This pleasant artifice of non-artifice continues throughout.

Ray, who writes his own screenplays though often from other material, is sometimes called Chekhovian. This seems to me superficial. Chekhov, incomparably subtle and implicative though he was, used those qualities to dramatize lives. Ray's intent is more like Yasujiro Ozu's. (In fact, *Branches of the Tree* has some resemblance to the last section of *Tokyo Story*.) The artist's vocation, according to this intent, is to find revealing currents of life, to respect them and let them flow. Ray lacks Ozu's complete technical mastery; there is some bumpy editing. And the performances sometimes stray into theatricality. But his ambition is the same as Ozu's.

Those who saw the last Oscar telecast saw Ray accepting a special award in his hospital bed in Calcutta. He has been gravely ill for some time. But there is at least one more completed film, *The Stranger*, coming to the Walter Reade and, I hope, to other places.

Robert Altman also makes an assumption about his viewers. He assumes

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Casablanca. *Reissued for its fiftieth anniversary, it shows why it has survived fifty years. (Reviewed 5/4/92)* **Howards End.** *The adaptation of Forster does him no disservice, and the acting—especially by Vanessa Redgrave, Emma Thompson, and Anthony Hopkins—is glorious. A gem. (3/23/92)* **JFK.** *Now it's a hit in Japan! With its (significant) virtues and (significant) flaws, it is something more than a worldwide success—it's a necessary experience. (1/27/92)* **Noises Off.** *Not a hit, I've heard. Pity. This farce about the rehearsal and performance of a farce has more laughs than that premise might suggest. Michael Caine scintillates. (4/20/92)* **—SK**

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nat they are wised-up—hip and self-ongratulatory about their hipness. His ıtest film, **The Player** (Fine Line), is hailed s his long-awaited return after an bsence of some years, as further proof hat he is an unappreciated master. I dis-ent. I haven't missed him; and I think ıe's overappreciated.

The Player, with a screenplay by Michael Tolkin from his own novel, is a ilm-world film. Just as the theater loves olays about the theater, so Hollywood .oves films, however satirical, about Hol-lywood. (Chaplin's second short, *Kid Auto Races at Venice*, 1914, was about film-making.) In this case the story is sprin-kled with brief appearances by famous faces, as if to prove that it's really about the real Hollywood. How we are to distin-guish between actors—say, Tim Robbins and Greta Scacchi—who play fictitious characters and actors such as Anjelica Huston and Burt Reynolds who appear as themselves is an aesthetic question that never really arises because the pic-ture is insufficiently pressing.

Robbins plays a boy-wonder studio executive who is slipping because he hasn't come up with anything good lately. He is threatened by the emer-gence of an even younger hotshot pro-ducer at his studio. He is also threatened, physically, by an anonymous writer whom he once rejected. Robbins gets into a sit-uation where he actually murders the writer—he thinks. The story winds through a lot of false trails without any sort of center. In crudest terms, there's no one to root for, and unlike Mamet or Pinter, for instance, the story isn't re-motely strong enough to thrive without such a center. The end is pointlessly wry.

The film is supposed to afford an inside view of Hollywood. It does, I sup-pose, but allowing for a change in proper nouns and in a few numbers, it's the same old inside view. The story's nub is an idea for a screenplay that is pitched to the studio and that is considered terrific. The studio makes the picture. But the screenplay sounds so stupid that the enthusiasm for it demolishes the sup-posed expertise of the people involved. Robbins's performance doesn't help; usually he's an adequate behaver in films, but here he is merely wispy and disheveled. Scacchi's role, as a fey painter, is overwritten because it serves no real purpose in the picture.

Altman's direction is undistinguished except for two showy set pieces. First, at the start, a very long tracking shot done with dolly and crane, whose presumed virtuosity is underscored by someone's mention of the opening shot of Welles's *Touch of Evil* while it's going on. Second, a nightmarish confrontation in a Pasadena police station with Whoopi Goldberg as the chief detective twirling a tampon as she talks. This so-brave joke is typical of a picture that strains hard to be smart and is ultimately repellent. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

Opinions

I started a bit of a *logomachia* last month by proposing that one way for the *Times* to relax its monolithic control over the New York stage was to move David Richards from the Sunday Arts and Leisure section, where his influence is minimal, to an equal position on the daily with the all-powerful Frank Rich. I wasn't, as some readers assumed, offering comment on the comparative abilities of neighboring *Times* critics. I was suggest-ing that audiences might become less sheeplike about following a daily reviewer's judgments if they could read two different notices on the same page. When a sick patient is told he has a fatal or lingering disease, he usually seeks a second opinion. Why should the fabu-lous invalid be condemned to permanent hospitalization by a single diagnosis?

If you vetted *Times* theater notices over the last two weeks, you might have noticed that, aside from the similarity of their names, Rich and Richards have had very little in common lately. Rich was entranced by Ariel Dorfman's writing in *Death and the Maiden* but appalled by Mike Nichols's production. Richards's reverse judgment panned the play while praising the acting and directing. Ecstatic about John Guare's *Four Baboons Adoring the Sun*, Rich implied that anyone who didn't find it moving was probably emotionally deficient. Richards, silent about his own problems, found emo-tional deficiencies in the work. Rich, con-sistent with his new benevolence, forsook his customary animus toward JoAnne Akalaitis to extol her production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. Richards found it histri-onically inept.

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The issue is not who's right or wrong about the quality of these productions. It's hardly unusual for reviewers to disagree, and even the best critical minds can make bad calls. We revere Bernard Shaw for his ideas, wit, and analytical power, though he failed to see the virtue of *The Importance of Being Ernest*, just as we read Kenneth Tynan for his remarkable capacity to describe the theatrical event, though he preferred theatrical events created by John Osborne over those by Samuel Beckett or Jean Genet. No, the issue is not a critic's batting average. Only posterity will decide on that, assuming posterity continues to have an interest in the matter. The issue, rather, is whether one individual on a single New York newspaper should be allowed to decide the fate of the whole theatrical enterprise.

What should concern us, in short, is the confounding of critical opinion with critical infallibility. Opinions are the most partial, provisional, and common equipment in a reviewer's tool box—any layman can have them—so it is dismaying that the relationship between subjective judgment and absolute power should have grown so tight at the *Times*. Theatergoers reading the conflicting views of Rich and Richards cheek by jowl would be reminded that even the most informed opinions are subject to reasoned dispute. They might even be encouraged to develop their own opinions by going to see the play the critics disagreed about. The least we might expect is that the public would grow to understand that the theater exists for purposes other than providing an occasion for critics to opinionate about it.

Having cleared my throat by questioning the importance of opinions, let me offer my own highly arguable evaluations of the productions disputed by Rich and Richards, hoping that my views, however negative, will be an incentive rather than a deterrent to interest in the plays. I confess I didn't see a lot of virtue in Ariel Dorfman's **Death and the Maiden** (Brooks Atkinson Theatre). The work is about a woman—from a "country [probably Chile] that has just given itself a democratic government after a long period of dictatorship"—who, with the help of her reluctant husband, turns the tables on the right-wing sadist she believes had raped and tortured her. I found the plot preposterous, resting on more coincidences in a day than most people experience in a lifetime, and the style struck me as conventional agitprop realism. It's as if *Extremities* had been rewritten for a benefit held by Amnesty International, or *The Boys from Brazil* were being refilmed for a meeting of Human Rights Watch.

The heroine defines "the need of the country" as to "somehow put into words what has happened to us," but her own words are hardly a model of expository prose ("I want you inside me a lot," she says to her husband, who later reflects, "We can explore all the frontiers but we'll still have that unpredictable female soul"). Dorfman creates some Pirandellian suspense over whether the fellow sitting bound and gagged in this comfortable house is actually the Mengele-type doctor who liked to play Schubert while torturing his victims with electric shocks (she never saw his face), or just a poor schnook who gave her husband a lift in his car. It's sensible of him not to resolve this, but then very little is resolved in this play, other than the woman's passion for vengeance.

The production style belongs less to Santiago than to Beverly Hills. Tony Walton has designed a triangulated suburban home with plaster columns that Nichols has rented to three good Hollywood stars: Glenn Close, Richard Dreyfuss, and Gene Hackman. The actors do what they can, considering that Close and Dreyfuss are miscast as husband and wife, and they're all miscast as earnest South Americans. Actually, I found Nichols's direction relatively subdued, compared with his usual habit of pumping laughing gas into toothache plays. But then no one either on stage or off seemed to regard this event as anything less than an obligation.

Four Baboons Adoring the Sun (Vivian Beaumont) started, we're told, as a sketch for an opera by Leonard Bernstein. It's still a sketch and still pretty operatic. (Would that Bernstein had lived to compose it, thus sparing us Stephen Edwards's lanolin underscoring.) I suspect that the spirited John Guare rushed it into production too fast—three or four drafts shy of completion. Guare's purpose in his recent work has been to force conventional people into unconventional situations, pushing them toward a crisis of self-realization that might be summed up by Rilke: "You must change your life." In theory it's a lofty idea, but the practice sometimes wobbles off the edge of the bathtub. What else accounts for the moist ending of *Six Degrees of Separation*, in which an upper-class woman victimized by a black scam artist later realizes that *he* is really the victim and chides herself for failing to save him. (Reality proved more interesting: following the play's success, the con man who inspired it tried to extort money from the playwright and even threatened his life.)

In *Four Baboons*, two lovers and the nine children they have between them go on an archaeological dig in Sicily. Haunted by ancient gods, these tourists fall prey to phantasmagoric experience Two of the children, barely into the teens, decide to make love (against eac parent's wishes)—and the boy, who ider tifies with Icarus, climaxes their ecstasy b jumping off a mountain to his death. Th girl, having refused to join him, guiltil regrets losing her "one chance to be goddess." But the real stunner come when the boy's father also blames he ("Why didn't you jump?"), and br[illegible]ks up with her mother as a result ("Why d[illegible] you have a child and I don't?"—actually he still has three). These are questions "con ventional" people rarely ask. But ther they haven't shared such unconventiona experiences.

Perhaps the play would have seemed a little less absurd had it received a less overheated production. But Peter Hall has used the occasion to get his colored lights going again. On Tony Walton's huge tribal circle, backed by a large turning globe and often belching smoke, the stage shivers and shakes and separates (during an earthquake), while a scantily clad satyr named Eros sings and kibitzes throughout, showing generous portions of his bare behind. Eros, representing pagan sexual freedom, turns the play into a Cliff Notes version of D.H. Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia*. The part is not well played, but neither are the other roles. It's hard enough to perform along with nine young children. ("Never get on stage with kids or animals," warned W.C. Fields—would that he had booked passage with the family to Sicily.) But it's even harder when kitsch music and sound effects are continually competing with the dialogue. The evening's worst failing is to make some very good actors look uncomfortable. Stockard Channing tries to charm her way through an unwritten role, while James Naughton as the archaeologist lopes like a cowboy and croons like a baritone. I admit my jaundiced reaction may be due to emotiona deficiencies.

JoAnne Akalaitis's first production as the New York Public Theater's artistic director displays her virtues in abundance—alas, the defects of those virtues, too. Her version of John Ford's **'Tis Pity She's a Whore** is undeniably terrific to look at. Set in Fascist Italy during the '30s, the production has a design by John Conklin that proves to be the best performance on stage—a compound of futurist and surrealist elements that ravish your eye while demonstrating how easily art can become a slave to tyranny. As interpolated cries of "Duce" fill the air, and posters extolling God, Country, and Family materialize between the Roman arches of the stage, Conklin rolls out huge cutouts of a child's hands, anonymous nude women, and tearful faces

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inspired by de Chirico, Marinetti, Dali, and other artists of the time.

Akalaitis shows no squeamishness about exploring the sanguinary aspects of *'Tis Pity*—a repertory staple in Artaud's Theater of Cruelty. Her finest moment, along with the blinding of Putana, is the culminating blood bath, when Giovanni, arriving with his sister's heart impaled upon his dagger, participates in another three or four deaths, including his own. The stage is literally awash in gore, the impact so full of horror that, for once in the history of this play, the audience refrained from laughing.

She is less successful in extracting the theme of the work, which is offered as an object lesson in the brutalization of women by macho males (including Giovanni—who writes an anti-female obscenity in blood on the wall of Annabella's room). Women are certainly treated badly in *'Tis Pity*, but so is everyone. Ford wrote this incestuous version of *Romeo and Juliet* less to make a feminist point than to demonstrate (years in advance of Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky) that when God is dead, anything is possible. The abnormal love of Giovanni and Annabella is about the only redeeming feature in a world of social, political, and religious corruption, and when he takes her life at the end, Giovanni is taking the only course left to him, monstrous though it is.

Missing from Akalaitis's interpretation is not only Giovanni's towering intellect (the Friar describes him as a "miracle of wit"), but his motivating narcissism. He loves his sister largely because she's his twin—as one commentator says, they make love in a mirror and take identical vows. As played by Val Kilmer, however, he is simply an edgy, sulky, shambling boy, while Jeanne Tripplehorn's Annabella, befitting her victim status, is too subdued. Neither of these characters evokes much pathos, though the greatness of the play lies in the way the playwright redeems their corruption from an even more corrupt time. Their last scene together has virtually no love, warmth, or reconciliation, when it should be breaking your heart. Because these are actors well trained for the stage (and not just for close-ups in *The Doors* and *Basic Instinct*), one has to conclude that Akalaitis has misdirected them, especially since virtually all the other roles—with the intermittent exceptions of Erick Avari's Vasques and Jared Harris's Soranzo—are indifferently performed. No one on stage reveals an interior life, and the comic scenes are execrable. "This part has been scurvily played," says one of the characters about another in the play, and he might have been indicting almost the entire cast.

Still, the event is well worth seeing just for the brilliance of its colors and the boldness of its approach. Akalaitis may be wrongheaded and reductive to make this great seventeenth-century classic conform to contemporary feminist views, but the force of her commitment and her remarkable imagination must compel respect. Much more thought, preparation, and sweat went into the making of this blood-soaked masterpiece than hasty opinions can do justice to. •

Pilgrim's Progress

BY EUGENE D. GENOVESE

The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr., Volume One: Called to Serve, January 1929–June 1951 Senior Editor: Clayborne Carson; Volume Editors: Ralph E. Luker, Penny A. Russell; Advisory Editor: Louis R. Harlan

(University of California Press, 484 pp., $35)

Heroes are always hard to find, and they are especially hard to acknowledge in this time of moral decadence. A sovereign cult of self-expression paradoxically feeds the childish notion that individuals count for little in history; and an even more insidious form of denigration is born of the belief that no flesh-and-blood human being deserves to be considered great, lest his greatness cast doubt on the equality of all "persons" in the marketplace of egalitarian dreams. So let us pity particularly those harsh right-wing critics of Martin Luther King Jr. who abhor the excesses of an individualism devoid of civic discipline, and who nobly plead for the impassioned recognition of national symbols: how they must gag to see King the only hero to command such recognition! And let us give thanks that no amount of postmodernist, anti-individualist blather on the other side is likely to dim our memory of the man who emerged as the civil rights movement's greatest leader, symbol, and martyr.

The long-awaited publication of King's papers has begun, and the quality of this first volume fully justifies the deliberate pace at which the editors have chosen to work. It contains letters and other documents that confirm the main features of King's early life as it has been depicted by his biographers. Most of the volume, however, consists of his early term papers from Morehouse College, which King attended between 1944 and 1948, and Crozer Theological Seminary, where he was a student from 1948 to 1951, and these texts provide invaluable material about his intellectual development.

This first volume may be read from different perspectives. I shall focus on King as a young seeker of God and an aspirant theologian. For, however important the social and political questions that now interest us, a proper respect for his life's work requires that we consider seriously the questions that most directly engaged King in his time and his place. His career as a theological liberal paralleled his career as a political liberal, but with a twist: eventually he made important concessions to theological conservatism even as he became politically more radical. The twist is not as surprising as it might appear to be. The explanation may be found in his general shift toward a greater appreciation of inherent human sinfulness. As he tempered his theological liberalism in this respect, King took a more sober view of political possibilities. He came to rely less on spiritual appeals and moral suasion, and more to recognize the necessity for a large measure of force (though not violence) in the struggle for social justice.

King grew up in a strong and loving family, embedded in a solid, law-abiding, church-going black community in racially segregated Atlanta. He was descended from a long line of dedicated Baptist preachers who led their people, at considerable risk, in a dangerous struggle against segregation and racism. The Atlanta into which King was born in 1929 had burgeoned into a city of 270,500, more than four times its size in 1890. Atlanta represented the "New" South then, as it does now. Very much a product of the postslavery era, its leaders paid lip service to the chivalrous old regime, while barely hiding their embar-

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rassment and their contempt; and they pushed their city toward economic and political participation in an industrial and increasingly bourgeois United States. Atlanta had been a veritable frontier town before the Civil War, known more for desperadoes and men on the make than for ladies and gentlemen. The gentry viewed it as a Yankee town, and to this day conservative Southerners may be heard to say that "even Sherman had some good in him. He *did* burn Atlanta."

After Reconstruction, whites in Atlanta prided themselves on the city's racial peace, and they especially pointed to Booker T. Washington's famous "Atlanta Compromise" speech of 1895, in which he urged Southern blacks to accept social segregation and political marginality while they devoted themselves to economic advancement. But not all blacks agreed, and by 1900 even the redoubtable Washington faced rising criticism from militantly anti-segregationist blacks. The explosions came, the worst in 1906, with one of those savage white assaults on the black community that have euphemistically been called race riots. In the aftermath, blacks concentrated on building up their own communities, drawing on a solid middle class and working class to strengthen their churches, schools, and businesses. And, combining political prudence with fierce pride, they scored impressive successes.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Sr. ("Daddy King") followed in the footsteps of his Baptist preacher forebears. A political realist who eschewed suicidal adventures, he preached a social gospel that combined a theologically conservative message of personal deliverance with a political demand for racial justice. His son, even as a boy, had trouble with the theology, but not with the principle that the church had to speak for the political and social aspirations of the community.

Not quite 15, Martin Jr. emerged as a prize-winning orator at Booker T. Washington High School, where he held forth on "The Negro and the Constitution," declaring that "black America still wears chains." Two years later, as a sophomore at Morehouse College in 1946, he wrote and saw published a letter to the Atlanta *Constitution* in which he protested against racial inequality. Consisting of two short, powerful paragraphs, the style and the substance of the letter announced the man in the making. After giving short shrift to the latest expressions of white fear of miscegenation, the young King wrote:

MARTIN LUTHER KING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

> We want and are entitled to the basic rights and opportunities of American citizens: the right to earn a living at work for which we are fitted by training and ability; equal opportunities in education, health, recreation, and similar public services; the right to vote; equality before the law; some of the same courtesy and good manners that we ourselves bring to all human relations.

Even as a teenager King proved worthy of his family tradition by bravely and eloquently entering the struggle, speaking out in a manner that few were wont to do. At the same time, as his earliest autobiographical reflections show, he struggled successfully with himself to overcome feelings of hatred toward whites. Those feelings were owed to his experiences as a student on prolonged visits to the bigoted North, as well as in the segregated South. (In 1945, for example, in New Jersey, King and some friends were refused service at a tavern and threatened at gunpoint.) Then too, King grew up during the Depression, in which he witnessed, with indignation, the suffering of working people, black and white. Raised in a Republican household, as most blacks of his generation were, he developed early in life a distrust of capitalism and a preference for a vague democratic and Christian socialism.

King's early letters breathe a deep and well-requited love for father, mother, and family, as well as a respect grounded both in personal feeling and a healthy sense of filial duty. Family life, though, had its share of internal tensions. Relations with his father were especially taxing, with evidence of an early Oedipal struggle that would delight orthodox Freudians. His father, like his mother, demonstrably loved his children, but he was an old-fashioned disciplinarian. King chafed under considerable paternal strictness, but his respect for his father became if anything stronger over time, an evolution fraught with significance for his own theological and political development.

Daddy King was a bright and courageous man, and a powerful preacher; but he was a man of limited learning with little inclination to challenge biblical authority, and so he could easily evoke condescension and even embarrassment in a son for whom he was providing much greater educational advantages than he had himself enjoyed. Young Martin recoiled from the content as well as the form of his religiously orthodox forebears and sought a more cerebral religion, a faith that could pass muster by scientific standards and by the lights of modern sensibility. He was not above treating much Southern Baptist belief and church practice (black and white) with an edge of contempt, though he would slough it off as he

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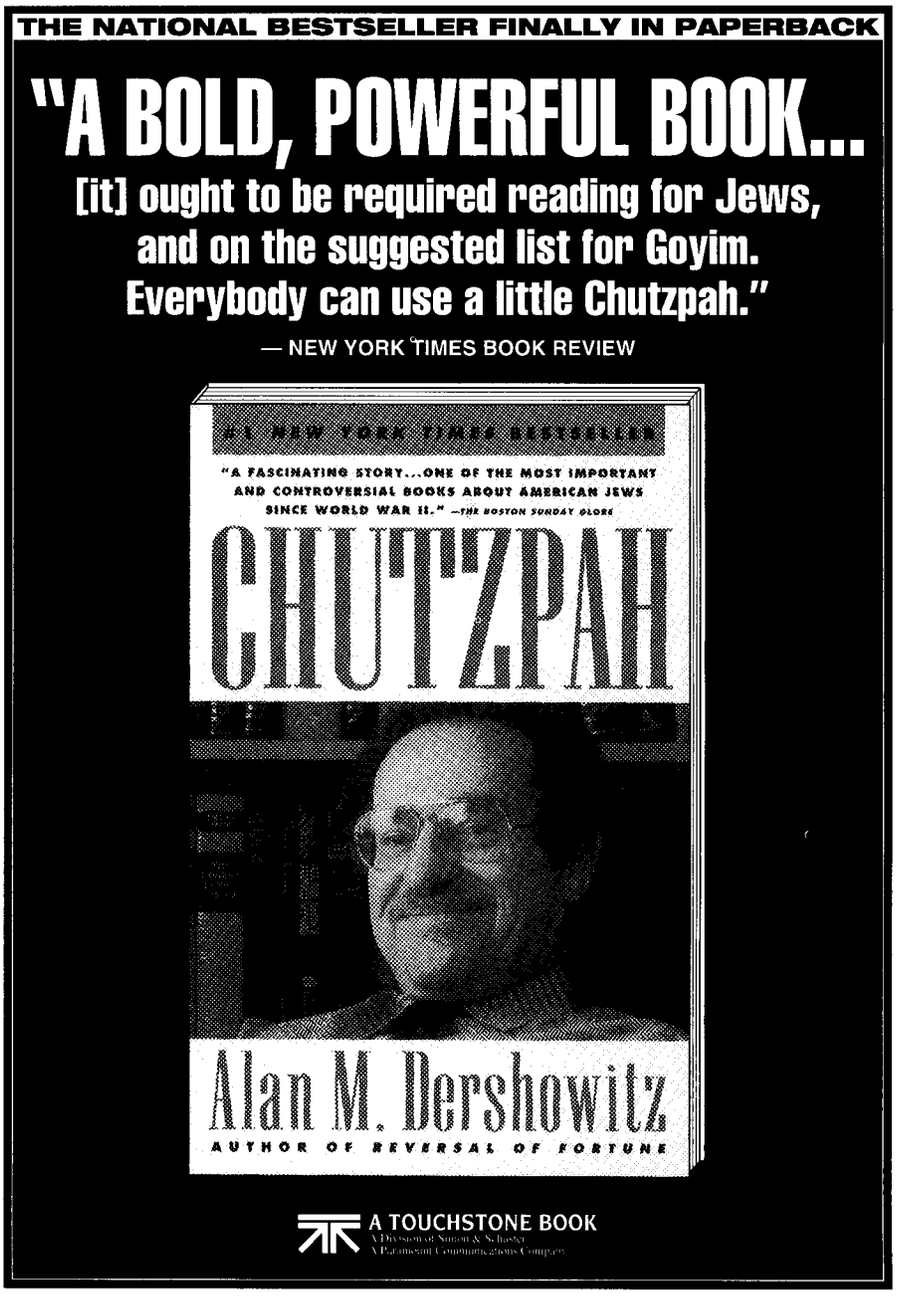
came to recognize how much their product he was.

Attracted to fashionable liberal theology, to political radicalism, and to intellectual sophistication, King distanced himself—though never meanly or decisively—from Daddy King and from his community. In later years he remained a theological liberal, though an increasingly chastened one. And as he became more critical of his own theological liberalism, his understanding of, and his respect for, the more traditional religious tendencies of his father and his community steadily deepened. In particular, he came to appreciate, even if he could not quite embrace, their dogged insistence on the Word. He also came to appreciate, and in this instance also to embrace, their belief about an inherent sinfulness in all men that cautioned against utopian expectations.

At Morehouse, which he entered in his midteens, probably earlier than he should have, King encountered admirable teachers who encouraged his rebellion against orthodoxy but curbed any incipient disrespect for the traditions of his people. Led by the scholarly and politically engaged Benjamin Mays, Morehouse's formidable president, the best of his teachers were intellectually talented men who stressed scientific method, historical accuracy, and empirical investigation, and cautioned against received wisdom, prejudice, and dogmatism. Though he was not yet an especially dedicated student, and was rather prone to partying, King learned a great deal at Morehouse. His professors rated him as intelligent and promising, though not brilliant. Still, he displayed considerable intellectual curiosity and concern for social, political, and religious questions. For better or worse, his years at Morehouse strengthened his radical tendencies in religion as well as politics.

The recent revelation that King plagiarized his doctoral dissertation at Boston University (the thesis, "A Comparison of the Conceptions of God in the Thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman," was completed in 1955 and will be included in the second volume of the papers) came as a painful shock, although some scholars seem previously to have glimpsed the truth but preferred to remain silent. The careful notes of this volume's editors reveal that King's susceptibility to the charge of plagiarism began with his term papers at Morehouse and Crozer. And here we must note the intellectual and professional integrity, as well as the tact and the good sense, that Clayborne Carson and his staff at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change—most notably Ralph E. Luker and Penny A. Russell, the editors of this first volume—have brought to the disagreeable task of exposing the story to full view. (Indeed, they deserve general congratulations, as does the University of California Press. This volume is a splendid job. The long biographical and analytical introduction, bolstered by fine charts on genealogy and chronology, is fresh and instructive; and the "Statement of Editorial Principles and Practices" lucidly describes the procedures for selection of representative documents from a massive archive, and the annotations for each item are painstaking. Coretta Scott King, Christina King Farris, and the advisory board have every reason to be proud of their choice of a general editor and of the staff he put together.)

This early plagiarism contains no few curiosities. By and large, King's probably overworked professors (at least at Morehouse) let him get away with it, though not without occasionally chiding him about the carelessness of his citations. Yet King does not seem to have tried to get away with much. He usually indicated the works that he was cribbing from, thereby leading his professor directly to the scene of the crime. He often misquoted in a manner that suggests impatience with scholarly procedures and just plain sloppiness rather than an intent to deceive. It certainly was not an expression of laziness or an unwillingness to do the required work. King's undergraduate papers reveal an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CHUTZPAH
Alan M. Dershowitz
AUTHOR OF REVERSAL OF FORTUNE
A TOUCHSTONE BOOK

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inquisitive mind, a genuine interest in the subject matter, some hard study, and a strong effort to organize the ideas of leading scholars and theologians so as to work out a point of view of his own.

By his own admission King worked eclectically, borrowing from hither and yon ideas and expressions that he could arrange in a pattern compatible with his own thoughts. With one or two exceptions, these papers would pass muster as good work if only he had taken fifteen minutes or so to straighten out his references and put in the requisite quotation marks. And the best of King's youthful essays—on the relation of the ancient pagan cults to Christianity, the ethics of Judaism, the problem of God's relation to evil—are worth reading, at peak moments, for their intrinsic content, and generally as evidence of a fine mind engaged in a struggle to find God as well as himself.

Full justice to King's youthful efforts (and to his later efforts, too) requires a critical review of the liberal theology to which he generally subscribed, and of the theologians to whose work he most often responded. "Liberal theology" is a rubric that covers a multitude of sins and, presumably, virtues; it can become an easy catch-all for the derision or the approbation of tendencies that should be considered discretely. Suffice it to recall for immediate purposes that the Unitarians captured Harvard and much of the Boston elite early in the nineteenth century, and that the defenders of Christian orthodoxy in the principal Northern churches slowly surrendered so much ground that their white Southern brethren dubbed them "baptized infidels." The concept of original sin went down in flames early, and the concept of human depravity followed suit, although more often than not these concepts were not so much repudiated as reinterpreted out of existence.

Much else followed, until today it is difficult to know what of Christian doctrine, if anything, remains in the professedly "mainstream" churches. The Episcopal Church, for example, proudly invites non-Trinitarians, Jews, Muslims, and even atheists into its House of Many Mansions. And why not? The only God left standing so loves the world that he forgives all our sins and welcomes all of us into the Kingdom of Heaven—if, that is, he really exists, which these moderns are entitled to question even as they take Holy Communion.

During the nineteenth century, the battle raged with mounting fury and considerable bitterness. The more genuinely orthodox—for example, the Old School Presbyterians at Princeton—fought a determined rearguard action. But a rearguard action was all that it turned out to be. The Southerners, by contrast, put up a better fight, as they generally have; but their theological cause became tragically intertwined with their defense of slavery, and went down with it.

Science provided much of the heavy artillery against orthodoxy, but the battle was less between scientists and believers than between divines who were determined at any cost to render theology compatible with scientific method and divines who increasingly insisted on a separation of spheres. Before the Civil War, even the orthodox theologians had denied any possible contradiction between science and religion, insisting that they were mutually supportive. After the war, however, Darwinism and the remarkable development of the sciences proved unassimilable. Step by step the attempt to render theology and science compatible led to the rout of Christian orthodoxy—to a bunkerlike fundamentalism on the one hand and a repudiation of essential doctrine on the other.

The Southern black churches have had their own history regarding these questions, and it has yet to be studied with anything like the care that it deserves. In many respects the Southern black churches have ranged close to those Southern white churches that still try to hold the line for the Word, but they have always espoused a social gospel of their own, which has especially stressed the incompatibility of Christianity and racial injustice. Daddy King, like his forebears, stood astride this tradition, containing its tensions within himself as best he could. His son, attracted to the modernist theology of the wider European and American Christian world, almost instinctively tried to resolve the tension through the acceptance of a liberal theology committed to social action.

Despite his best efforts, King never completely shook off the theological orthodoxy—the conservatism—that constituted a critical part of his people's religious inheritance. His ultimate acceptance of the tension between his own liberal theological inclinations and a gnawing sense of the reality of a God of Wrath and a world of sinners led him more and more to a stern view of human weakness, and thereby to a political realism, to a position that his people have generally preferred to recurring utopianisms.

Edgar Sheffield Brightman stood out among the liberal theologians who influenced King, even before King went to study with him at Boston University's Divinity School in 1951. Certain features of Brightman's thought seem especially to have impressed the youthful King, to have reinforced what he presumably learned from the views of his professors at Morehouse: a determined effort to render Christian theology consistent with the demands of scientific method, and an insistence that God possesses only limited power and is a progressive being capable of moral and intellectual growth over time. As Brightman wrote in *The Problem of God* (1930), "Frankly, I believe in a God who has more to do than he has yet done, and so is capable of growth." And another feature of Brightman's thought was probably the most important for King: the emphasis on personal experience as a way to God, and, by extension, the defense of a personal God against those theologians who were sliding toward a notion of depersonalized Spirit. At least for some years, King does seem to have been attracted to Brightman's projection of a God of Love to the virtual extinction of a God of Wrath.

Liberal theology, including the versions that initially attracted King, has generally been embarrassed by the Old Testament's God of Wrath, to whom it has counterposed Jesus as Pure Love. Brightman went to lengths of referring to "Jesus the crucified Son" and "God the loving Father." Indeed, despite all the disclaimers, liberal theology has been rather embarrassed by the Bible itself. For, among other difficulties, no one has yet refuted the evidence that the Bible sanctioned slavery. On what grounds, then, can God be defended as perfectly good? And the invocation of God's perfect love solves nothing when his love, like his will, emerges as an expression of the individual's own experience and understanding, that is, of every man's moral standpoint.

Brightman tried, like everyone else, to account for evil in a world presided over by a God understood as omnipotent and perfectly good. He repeatedly insisted that only a perfectly good being could be a God at all and worthy of being worshiped. King held to such a view all his life, although even as a youth he was more deeply disturbed by the orthodox insistence on human depravity than most of his favorite theologians seem to have been. Brightman solved the problem to his own satisfaction by denying the omnipotence of God and postulating a "Given" that God himself had to come to terms with.

Even as a teenager, King had become troubled by the relation of faith to rea-

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son, and by the riddles of theodicy. If God's will is not ultimately inscrutable, then faith must yield to science and a deified Reason on all essential matters, and nothing prevents his will from miraculously conforming to our own politics. But if God's will is ultimately inscrutable, then it is revealed to us partially, only in such doses as he chooses to reveal. And if that revelation cannot be found in the Word, however great the difficulties of interpretation, where can it be found? The Bible offers Jesus simultaneously as Redeemer and as Judge who presides over the law that he came to fulfill. The God who gave us the law did not forswear vengeance. He declared it to be his own monopoly: "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." Jesus did not come as one more prophet but as the Christ.

For Brightman and the other liberal theologians whom King echoed, Christianity joins Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, even philosophy and science, as ways of finding God. But the result is a theological capitulation: if Christianity surrenders its special claim to being Spirit and the Word Made Flesh and the "final revelation" (in Tillich's sense), why not prefer Buddhism or Hegelianism? King's student essays suggest that he was by no means sure that Christianity could claim superiority. Instead he offers a Jesus who is a man especially touched by divinity but considerably less than the Second Person of a Trinity, which King himself does not seem to have believed in.

King never took the doctrine of original sin seriously, and he later recalled how, as a 13-year-old, he upset his Sunday school teachers (and Daddy King?) by scoffing at the bodily resurrection of Jesus, which he continued to regard, like the doctrine of the virgin birth and much else, as unscientific and therefore as metaphorical. His view of Jesus appeared vividly in an essay written at Crozer. It betrays misgivings about his all-too-human picture of Jesus, but concludes: "...his divine quality or this unity with God was not something thrust upon Jesus from above, but it was a definite achievement through the process of moral struggle and self-abnegation." King only rarely mentioned the Holy Spirit, and then as little more than an abstract morality. His professors heartily approved of these plunges into what Daddy King probably regarded as rank heresy. Indeed, according to Taylor Branch in *Parting the Waters*, the standing joke told by the students at Crozer about Professors James B. Pritchard and M. Scott Enslin was that "Pritchard destroyed the biblical image of Moses in the first term and Enslin finished off Jesus in the second."

No doubt Christianity should be considered both as a concern for the afterlife and as an engagement here on earth; and historically the black churches have insisted on both efforts with special vigor. But today one must search diligently, especially in the principal ("white") denominations, for a serious effort among the theologically liberal to meet the first half of the challenge. Worse, one finds everywhere the reduction of the second half to some fashionable political agenda, the most fashionable of which casts Jesus and the Bible as the spiritual font for social and political radicalism.

King's early essays signal the beginning of a lifelong struggle with such problems, marked by an increasingly critical stance toward his own liberal presuppositions. An early fascination with Hegel led him toward Marx or, rather, toward an engagement, born of his indignation at the breadlines of the 1930s, with a Christian socialism that drew on Marx in a manner recently espoused by some radical exponents of a theology of black liberation. As King grew older he did read Marx with sympathy and respect for his social theory, though he rejected Marx's materialist philosophy. But for King, Hegel also offered a dialectic of God, which, curiously, led him to follow Brightman's non-Hegelian projection of a finite God subject to an internally contradictory "Given" that is prior to himself and that contains the evil for which he is not personally responsible.

God, as perfect goodness, is therefore engaged in a ceaseless struggle to guide humanity (and himself?) away from the evil that he did not create, that he lacks the power to eradicate. Such a God exists in time, and therefore, according to Brightman and King, satisfies the demands of science. As such, God is a progressive being. No wonder, then, that in the more specifically political formulations of a subsequent host of radical theologians, God the Father implicitly yields to Jesus, understood less as the second person of the Trinity than as the compassionate, activist, progressive Son of Man.

Almost at the very moment that Brightman was publishing *The Problem of God* (1930) and *The Finding of God* (1931), upon which King drew heavily, John Crowe Ransom, the poet, critic, and spokesman for those Southern conservatives known as Agrarians, published a haunting, idiosyncratic excur-

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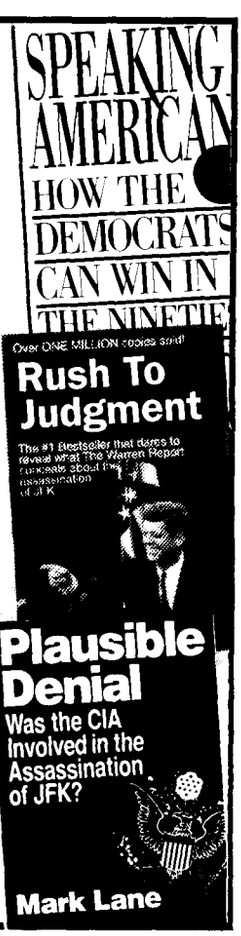
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sion into theology. Apparently King never read *God Without Thunder.* It is safe to say that he would have been appalled by it. Certainly his professors were not about to recommend the challenge mounted by King's fellow Southerner, if they knew it at all. Ransom scorned to question God's omnipotence and powerfully asked: Why bother to worship a God that we need not fear? He argued that only hubris would insist upon our capacity to understand God's will beyond the dictates of his Word, that human goodness lies precisely in submission to God's will.

When, years ago, I finished reading *God Without Thunder,* I threw it aside, muttering that I would rather burn eternally in hell than submit to the will of such an arbitrary, not to say monstrous, God. But then, as an atheist, I am at liberty to indulge in such grandstanding. Were I in grace and in fear of the wrath of a God who proclaimed himself "a jealous God," I would think again. Liberal (and liberationist) theology, in white or black, should warm every atheist's heart. For if God is a socially conscious political being whose views invariably correspond to our own prejudices on every essential point of doctrine, he demands of us no more than our politics require. Besides, if God is finite, progressive, and Pure Love, we may as well skip church next Sunday and go to the movies. For if we have nothing to fear from this all-loving, all-forbearing, all-forgiving God, how would our worship of him constitute more than self-congratulation for our own moral standards? As an atheist, I like this God. It is good to see him every morning while I am shaving.

Toward the end of his career at Crozer, King was already beginning a brave re-examination of his own most cherished views. At this point we must look ahead to the second volume of the papers, which will contain his doctoral dissertation on the theology of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman. Most of the dissertation is open to a graver charge of plagiarism than might be leveled at the Morehouse and Crozer essays, but even that "most" concerns only a serviceable if uninspired exposition of the thought of Tillich and Wieman. And his last chapter, which appears to have been entirely his own, is easily the most arresting and the most valuable part of the dissertation.

In it, King subjects the theology of Tillich and Wieman to a forceful criticism from decidedly more conservative ground than he had occupied earlier. Specifically, he protests against their abandonment of a personal God and a doctrine of personal immortality, and veers toward a more orthodox Christianity and a doctrine of sin that his father might have been more comfortable with. And, if I am reading him properly, King also implies a more critical view of Brightman's theology.

How much King's reading of Reinhold Niebuhr influenced his thinking remains in hot dispute; but here and elsewhere he was clearly influenced by the thought and the practice of the Southern black world in which he was raised, and which has always exhibited some strongly conservative, not to say fundamentalist, theological tendencies. Indeed, a vigorous debate has been raging over the specifically Afro-American sources of King's thought. It is even being asserted that much of his invocation of European theology and philosophy was largely a tactic to gain the respect and the attention of white Americans for his political message.

There is probably a grain of truth in this assertion, although those who push it hard might recognize that they inadvertently come close to accusing King of hypocrisy and deceit. (Not to mention the implicit accusation of Uncle Tomism leveled against the many black parents who, like W.E.B. DuBois, have long encouraged their children to study "the classics" without in the least denigrating their African heritage.) But King's early essays and his dissertation do not substantially support such a charge. They suggest, rather, that he invoked white European and American thinkers primarily because they raised questions that he considered vital to an honest search for a Christian understanding of God. In consequence, by the time he left Crozer he had prepared himself for a more realistic appraisal of political possibilities, and for a skeptical view of the utopianism that disfigured his earliest hopes for racial and social justice with unrealistic expectations of the political conversion of racists through Christian preaching.

King became a great preacher, but hardly a great theologian. His gifts as a preacher appeared early, as if in the blood that coursed through generation after generation on both sides of his family. Like father, like son: his preaching resonated with an extraordinary

Aubade

(On a "Talking Pyramid" Clock)

A-
bece-
darian
form, amateur
Egyptology.
This matte-black pyramid,
silver-vertexed, inches high,
implies a tomb that would inter,
eternally, the time. Merely touch
the top and it will synthesize a hid-
den voice. *Twelve P.M.* Who speaks? Meridian
light reveals the name SEIKO [hieroglyphic play:
"success" in Japanese] QUARTZ above the base, a text
that blurs on shallowest reflection. Inside, deified,

the corpses of a pharaoh and his queen, still cased in lead,
are heavily inscribed: EVEREADY reads an ar-
chaeologist of sleep, as *never ready* free-
ly echoes where, losing heart again, the heart's
cold chambers fill with fear. A scarab shunts
the dung-disk sun along, as the darks
of time wait out our afternoon.
May your comic Book of Dread
be closed, and may you once
delight in the form-
ing thought-balloon
that would chart
your dream:
Z...

DAVID SOFIELD

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black sermonic tradition, and careful study is beginning to suggest the significant impact of specifically Afro-American Christian thought (and not only of Afro-American Christian oratory) on the stronger features of King's own theology. But his genius as a preacher—and as a political leader—rested largely on his peerless ability to blend Euro-American and Afro-American theology and folk religion in a manner that remained firmly rooted in the particularism of his people *and* in the universality without which Christianity loses all meaning.

The influence of a genuine religious quest, of a true search for God and the meaning of life, on King's emergence as a great political leader is already apparent in these youthful efforts, which support his declaration in 1965 that "in the quiet recesses of my heart, I am fundamentally a clergyman, a Baptist preacher. This is my being and my heritage for I am also the son of a Baptist preacher, the grandson of a Baptist preacher, and the great-grandson of a Baptist preacher." One might wish that his theological training had been as rigorous and as broad as he seems to have been ready to welcome, but he struggled manfully, and with impressive results, to use the tools that lay at hand. A reading of these earliest essays strengthens the sense that his commitment to nonviolence flowed from a deeply held sense of God's will and the demands of a Christian life and was no mere matter of political strategy and tactics.

This first volume of King's papers provides a revealing glimpse of the qualities that led him to greatness. To paraphrase Gibbon on Belisarius (with emendations that Gibbon would abhor): his faults were those of his age, and of the sinful nature to which all human flesh is heir. His virtues, rooted in the traditions of his people, were largely his own.

EUGENE D. GENOVESE is the author most recently of *The Slaveholders' Dilemma: Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought, 1820-1860* (University of South Carolina Press).

The Real McCloy

BY JACOB HEILBRUNN

The Chairman: John J. McCloy
The Making of the American Establishment
by Kai Bird

(Simon and Schuster, 800 pp., $30)

America's Germany:
John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany
by Thomas Alan Schwartz

(Harvard University Press, 432 pp., $29.95)

If American history, as Richard Hofstadter observed, consists largely of a literature of "national self-congratulation," a special chapter might be reserved for the annals of the American establishment. In recent years the writing of those annals has amounted to a new and lucrative and remarkably uncritical genre of contemporary historiography. It began in 1986, with Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas's *The Wise Men*, which recalled the halcyon days when eminent Wall Street lawyers and bankers sacrificed lucrative careers to serve the public weal. Then the British writer Godfrey Hodgson produced *The Colonel* (1990), which hailed the arch-establishmentarian Henry Stimson as a kind of Platonic guardian of the republic. And most recently Joseph Alsop's *"I've Seen the Best of It,"* his posthumously published memoirs, mourned "that the whole view of the world and of history, the personal culture and private manners that produced these men, have all gone by the board." The nostalgic haze sent up by these books has transfigured the years preceding World War II, and the war years themselves, into a kind of Antonine Age, in which the stewards of American diplomacy could still work free from the fetters of democratic politics.

Yet surely the Northeastern establishment is an unlikely object of veneration. This particular elite, after all, traces its ancestry to the Civil War era, when its earliest members (such as J. P. Morgan) pocketed vast fortunes from government contracts and high-wire financial maneuvers. The Episcopal Church, the Ivy League colleges, and the Brahmins who joined the new elite as businessmen and lawyers lent a veneer of respectability, but the grimmer reality lay in "the system of '96," whereby Republican oligarchs colluded with Southern Bourbons to disfranchise almost all blacks and half of whites. Owing to that "system," Henry Cabot Lodge could purr that the United States was becoming an "aristocratic republic."

The Republican Party's repudiation of its anti-slavery origins at home led to full-blown racial imperialism abroad. (The Civil War had already engendered a new nationalism in the North: Melville's *Battle Pieces*, for instance, celebrates an America with "law on her brow and empire in her eyes.") In the 1890s Lodge, Theodore Roosevelt, and Elihu Root justified "manifest destiny" by invoking America's duty to civilize the inferior breeds abroad who were as incapable of self-government as American Negroes. These men were not alone in their racist cast of thought—Woodrow Wilson, for one, wrote in 1901 that it would be a "curse" to grant democratic institutions to peoples in the "childhood of their political growth"—but the belief in the innate superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race to dark-skinned "beasts" and "savages" (the words are Theodore Roosevelt's) formed an integral part of their outlook.

Root in particular, a Wall Street corporate lawyer and the founding father of the foreign policy establishment, was central in making the "aristocratic republic" the ruler of what John Hope Franklin has called an "empire of darker peoples." He employed his legal acumen as William McKinley's secretary of war to cover up American Army atrocities and concentration camps in the Philippines, and as Roosevelt's secretary of state to help transform the Caribbean into an American lake. And Root's career served as a model for his protégé Stimson. Rising from his mentor's law firm to become secretary of war under Taft, governor-general of the Philippines under Coolidge, and secretary of state under Hoover, Stimson was adept at conflating America's moral mission abroad with its business interests. Disdainful of democracy for its tendency to soften character, Stimson prided himself on his

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"combat psychology" and championed the strenuous life. (World War I, he wrote in 1919, "reminded me of nothing so much as a good grizzly-bear hunt in my younger days.") Welcoming the chance to become Franklin Roosevelt's secretary of war in 1940, he ran the department as a finishing school for the postwar foreign policy establishment.

His star pupil was John J. McCloy. No man better illustrates the elitism of postwar foreign policy. A valued counselor to every president from Roosevelt to Reagan, McCloy, too, began as a Wall Street lawyer. An assistant secretary of war during World War II, he oversaw the reconstruction of Germany as allied High Commissioner, and went on to become president of the World Bank, chairman of Chase Manhattan, and chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations. He chaired the President's Commission on Arms Control and Disarmament, ending his career in 1989 as a senior partner at Milbank, Tweed, where he represented the "Seven Sister" oil companies.

The higher McCloy rose, the more he shunned publicity. Referring to himself as a mere "leg man," he wanted nothing published on his career. Kai Bird's book, the first full-scale biography of its subject, makes it abundantly (though a little unwittingly) clear why McCloy desired silence. In minutely tracing some of the most significant episodes in McCloy's career—his internment of Japanese-Americans, his obstruction of the bombing of Auschwitz, his pardoning of Nazi industrialists, his attacks on Israel, his shady legal dealings—Bird's account reveals its subject to be a thoroughly despicable character.

Despite its length and its detail, this is not quite a definitive work. Bird, a contributing editor of *The Nation*, cannot bring himself to pronounce the unambiguous verdict that his findings demand. The high critical dudgeon that he has deployed against many American mandarins in his journalism seems to have deserted him in his book. Demonstrating, in page after page of plodding prose, just how contemptible McCloy was, Bird offers only the judgment that "in most instances he was truly the best representative of this elite club." That worried qualifier, "most instances," together with that otiose "truly," makes it hard to know where he stands. Such bromidic enunciations pervade the book, and they explain in part why the diligent accumulation of facts and isolated judgments, good as far as it goes, results in a rather flaccid and fact-clogged work without a clear and coherent theme.

Nor has Bird thought terribly hard about the club that McCloy represented so well. For, set in the broader context of the origins of the establishment, a pattern becomes apparent in McCloy's career. Bird benignly observes that "Stimson believed America should engage itself with the rest of the world," that he "bequeathed a complicated blend of toughness, idealism, and rationality to the men who considered him their mentor," and leaves it at that. Had Bird examined Root's and Stimson's careers, he would have realized that McCloy's disreputable actions were of a piece with their contempt for democracy, their sacerdotal view of the presidency, and their racist assumptions. Calling McCloy the best representative of such an elite should sound some alarms.

Unlike his master Stimson, McCloy did not enjoy a privileged childhood. Born in Philadelphia in 1895, McCloy was 4 when his father died and left the family destitute. Serving Philadelphia's Quaker grandees as a hairdresser, Anna McCloy molded her son into a different kind of servant. She put him through the Peddie Institute (an aspiring Andover), where he easily assimilated to upper-class mores. In 1912 he entered Amherst College, where he exercised the knack of cottoning on to wealthier friends; in his junior year he signed up for the Plattsburg military officer's training camp because "it seemed to me that all the right people went."

McCloy was trained to be obsessed with status. His induction into the establishment began in 1916, with his entry into Harvard Law School. He graduated after a tour of duty in France and joined Wall Street's leading law firm, Cravath, Henderson, in 1923. There he trained under the gaze of the imperious six-foot-four, 240-pound Paul Cravath, whose credo was that "brilliant intellectual powers are not essential ... too much wit, too great cleverness ... are quite as likely to impede success as to promote it." Never a brilliant student but always a hard and systematic worker, McCloy fit the Cravath mold precisely.

Honing his talents for legal chicanery, McCloy learned how to drive individual corporations into bankruptcy at the expense of holders of common stock—a skill that he exercised in takeovers of railroads during the '20s. When, in the '30s, Cravath lawyers were regularly hauled before congressional committees to defend their often dubious practices, McCloy was incensed. In his view, lawyers formed a natural aristocracy to whom politicians and the public should defer, and, when appropriate, give thanks.

McCloy himself had merited such thanks through his investigation of a notorious instance of German sabotage during World War I at Black Tom Island, a transit point for shipments to Europe. After scouring Europe for a decade for evidence, McCloy triumphed in 1939 before the International Mixed Claims Commission. The *novus homo* had all but arrived. This triumph catapulted him to fame on the Street; he was inducted into the Council on Foreign Relations and the exclusive Nisi Prius club, and he assumed his lifelong role as a kind of *consigliere* to the Rockefellers. "His status in the company of such men of wealth was not that of an equal," Bird points out, "but these uncrowned members of the American aristocracy depended upon his legal talents to insulate their wealth and social status from the uncertainties of a democratic republic."

McCloy had risen only to become a servant of the real establishment figures. But Stimson changed that: in 1940, aware of the unparalleled knowledge of German intelligence that McCloy had

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gained in the Black Tom inquiry, Stimson named him special adviser on intelligence. McCloy interpreted his brief broadly, and became Stimson's factotum. FDR appointed McCloy assistant secretary of war, and Stimson wondered whether anyone did anything in Washington without "having a word with McCloy."

Coupled with McCloy's dedication to hard work and sheer ambition was an obsession with espionage that Bird traces back to the Black Tom affair. With J. Edgar Hoover warning that exaggerated newspaper accounts of espionage were untrustworthy, McCloy's response was that "some of the widespread publicity and near-hysteria may have a salutary effect." After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, anti-Japanese sentiments reached fever pitch in California. The evidence suggests that Stimson and McCloy could have resisted the hysteria. But they did not wish to resist it.

To be sure, the pressure was intense. Bird reminds us that Representative Leland M. Ford of Los Angeles demanded that "all Japanese, whether citizens or not, be placed in inland concentration camps." And vegetable growers' associations insisted, grotesquely, that Japanese truck farmers be expropriated. More important, Bird seems unaware that internment did not come out of the blue. It had a vivid precedent in the American concentration camps in the Philippines that Root had tried to whitewash. That barbarism was a harbinger of things to come in California. As Godfrey Hodgson has pointed out, Root had set an example for Stimson and McCloy to follow.

The cunning with which McCloy carried out the internment of the issei and the nisei, first- and second-generation Japanese respectively, proved that he was a good student of Root's in flouting the Constitution and abdicating moral responsibility. As the War Department's civil affairs officer, McCloy was in charge of the internment of the Japanese and Japanese-Americans. At first he was uncertain as to whether their removal was a "military necessity." Attorney General Francis Biddle opposed harsh measures; the Army's chief law-enforcement officer Allen W. Gullion, and his assistant Karl Bendetsen, insisted on mass internment. According to Richard Gid Powers in *Secrecy and Power*, even Hoover considered internment unwise and unconstitutional. Once again, McCloy was more papist than the pope. He came down on the Army's side. "If it is a question of the safety of the country, [or] the Constitution of the United States," he exclaimed, "why the Constitution is just a scrap of paper to me"—which only begged the question of whether the safety of the country was indeed imperiled. Though McCloy knew that Hoover's FBI had smashed the only existing Japanese spy ring, he never required the Army to furnish further proof of Japanese subversion.

At McCloy's urging, Stimson asked Roosevelt if he would be "willing to authorize us to move Japanese citizens as well as aliens from restricted areas." FDR's carte blanche was a foregone conclusion; as early as 1936 he had suggested that Japanese-Americans seen greeting Japanese ships at Pearl Harbor should be put on "a list of those who would be the first to be placed in a concentration camp in the event of trouble." On February 11, 1942, he signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the War Department to license the "right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave" restricted areas.

McCloy showed his respect for the letter of the Constitution and his contempt for its spirit in the way he administered the program. By having a few Japanese exempted from internment, he provided for possible legal challenges; the exemptions would show that internment had been conducted on account not of race but of disloyalty. Bird omits to mention that the industrious McCloy also drafted a bill containing provisions for criminal penalties for violations of Executive Order 9066. The "evacuation" itself, so named by the War Department to convey the air of disaster relief (a point, I think, that Bird should have made), proceeded in stages, which McCloy hoped would minimize publicity. Again Bird gives the facts without drawing the obvious inference: the plans for secrecy suggest that popular sentiment did not remain entirely hostile to the Japanese-Americans, that McCloy was perfectly aware of this, that in pushing for internment he was *not* succumbing to popular pressures.

Indeed, in June 1942, following the Battle of Midway, McCloy was well aware that the specter of a Japanese invasion was a turnip-ghost. Yet he pushed ahead with internment, herding the issei and nisei at gunpoint into permanent "relocation centers." (They were more properly referred to in internal Army documents as "concentration camps.") By 1943 the Army had incarcerated 116,000 Japanese and American citizens in ten desolate barbed-wire concentration camps stretching across California, Utah, Idaho, Arizona, Wyoming, Colorado, and Arkansas.

Nor was this all. Bent on avoiding an adverse Supreme Court decision, McCloy twice suppressed material intended for presentation to the Court. The preface of General John DeWitt's *Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast* contained the admission that it was "impossible" to determine the loyalty of this "tightly-knit racial group." An alarmed McCloy, certain that in the face of this admission the justices would not sustain internment, expunged the offending preface and delayed the release of the entire report until the Supreme Court had heard three cases challenging the constitutionality of internment. The Court did not overturn internment in 1943.

When, in October 1944, the Court reheard the case of Fred Korematsu, whose suit it had remanded to a lower court in 1943, McCloy noticed in the Justice Department's brief a footnote condemning the DeWitt report for falsely reporting collusion between the Japanese and the enemy. Aware that his reputation was at stake, and also that Roosevelt opposed early release for fear that his re-election efforts in California would be damaged, McCloy insisted on the excision of the footnote. Otherwise the internees might have been released before the election.

Bird contends that internment was not only a "political success" but "an indication that McCloy's national-security philosophy was becoming a part of the national consensus." This is preposterous, a way of tarring the country instead of the man. No ethnic group has been interned in the United States since World War II. Bird never instances a single event that showed McCloy's "philosophy" to have become imbedded in a "national consensus." And in harping on the notion of a national security state, he reveals far more about his own obsession with national security than McCloy's, and his own willingness to exploit the tragedy of internment to discredit the concept of national security generally. There is something a little perverse about a criticism of postwar America that exempts, or at least blurs the moral consideration of, one of its most representative men.

Bird also neglects the racial dimension. McCloy, like Stimson, may well have regarded the Japanese as innately untrustworthy. True, McCloy sponsored the formation of a regiment of nisei soldiers; but this was another dodge by which he hoped to demonstrate to the Supreme Court that internment was carried out on the basis of loyalty, not race. (Later McCloy would claim undue credit for the inclusion of Japanese-Americans in the Army.)

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Harold Ickes, secretary of the interior at the time, was shocked by McCloy's actions and confided to his diary that "I like McCloy a lot ... but I have been told that he is more or less inclined to be a Fascist and this would not surprise me." Ickes's informants were right. Consider this letter to his old college president, Alexander Meiklejohn, in which McCloy justified indefinite incarceration. The letter is a revealing expression of an entire political sensibility. Its language retains the power to shock:

> We would be missing a very big opportunity if we failed to study the Japanese in these camps at some length before they are dispersed. We have not done a very good job thus far in solving the Japanese problem in this country.... These people, gathered as they now are in these communities, afford a means of sampling opinion and studying their customs and habits in a way we have never before had possible. We could find out what they are thinking about and might influence their thinking in the right direction.... I would rather treat them as guinea pigs and learn something useful than merely to treat them, or have them treated, as they have been in the past with such unsuccessful results.

Did McCloy ever have misgivings? Time only hardened his views. Appearing in 1981 before the congressional Commission on Wartime Relocation, he broke new ground in self-extenuation. The "deconcentration" of the Japanese had resulted in "their finding a healthier and more advantageous environment"; internment "was in the way of retribution" for Pearl Harbor; and a war against Cuba might well dictate the detention of Cuban-Americans—"those people"—living in southern Florida. When the commission urged Congress to compensate survivors of the camps, McCloy continued to defend the indefensible. Such a proposal, he fumed, was "utterly unconscionable and unfair to all those who suffered from the attack on Pearl Harbor, none of whom was adequately compensated." The commission was a "disgrace." According to Bird, when President Reagan grudgingly signed into law a bill paying $20,000 (hardly "adequate" compensation) to former internees, McCloy was "crestfallen." Having earned millions through his years in government, the chairman begrudged these citizens a few thousand dollars.

If the uglier traditions of the establishment manifested themselves in McCloy's handling of the Japanese, they took on even greater significance in his treatment of the Jews trapped in Hitler's concentration camps. Bird does not comment on the irony, but where McCloy had eagerly expanded the powers of the armed forces in interning the Japanese, he now pleaded that its capabilities were too limited to save the lives of the Jews. The former Cravath lawyer saw to it that proposals to aid Jews invariably reached a state of mortmain. By failing to act when he easily might have acted, McCloy incurred far greater guilt in regard to camps infinitely worse than those in which he had incarcerated the Japanese.

Reports of the systematic murder of Jews reached the United States as early as 1941 and were carried in the press. But the State Department did its best to frustrate actions to help. Not until January 1944 did Roosevelt, responding to Henry Morgenthau Jr.'s "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of Jews," establish the War Refugee Board (WRB), headed by John Pehle. McCloy served as Stimson's liaison to the WRB. As such, he "was in a unique position to initiate any serious consideration of military operations designed to rescue Jews," writes Bird. But this he would not do. When Pehle urged Roosevelt to issue a symbolic declaration offering shelter to all refugees, McCloy warned that such a statement would provoke Congress. In cases where national security concerns could not be invoked, McCloy's usual willingness to circumvent Congress evaporated.

Nor did McCloy lift a finger to disrupt the operations of the death camps. On the contrary, he actively obstructed efforts to bomb the rail lines leading to Auschwitz or the camp itself. In responding to WRB inquiries about the feasibility of bombing rail lines, McCloy blandly explained on July 4, 1944, that targeting Auschwitz was "impracticable," that it would require the "diversion of considerable air support essential to the success of our forces now engaged in decisive operations," that it was, in any case, "of such very doubtful efficacy that it would not amount to a practical project." The truth was that long-range American bombers, in attacking trivial targets near Auschwitz, had accidentally dropped bombs on the Monowitz camps, a division of Auschwitz. What is more, between July 7 and November 20, 1944, 2,500 bombers dropped their loads within thirty-five miles of Auschwitz. Yet on August 14 McCloy had responded to the pleas of the World Jewish Congress with an even finer flower: bombing raids "even if practicable, might provoke even more vindictive action by the Germans."

More was to come. In November, Pehle, who had himself been reluctant to request the bombing of Auschwitz, read a report written by two Polish escapees from Auschwitz. Horrified by its detailed account of Nazi genocide, he now urged McCloy to order the destruction of the "chambers and crematories in Birkenau through direct bombing action." Again McCloy refused. His resistance to aiding Jews so infuriated Morgenthau that during a 1944 Cabinet meeting he called him an "oppressor of the Jews."

Certainly McCloy was not immune to the fashionable aversion to Jews that was common in his tony circles. He was on friendly terms with Jewish financiers, but they never sought to enter firms like Cravath or the elite clubs that were a routine part of his life. His college friend and cherished brother-in-law Lew Douglas, Truman's ambassador to England, was a virulent anti-Semite. (McCloy had married up into a prominent German-American business family whose patriarch refused to have any dealings with Jews.) Bird perceptively observes that McCloy's own "prejudices regarding Jews were passive," that any "aggressive advocacy on their part was somehow grating and impolite." He regarded the pleas of Jewish leaders as annoying, and worse, as tactless. McCloy devoted himself to ending the war as quickly as possible, and he believed that there was nothing out of the ordinary about Nazi crimes against the Jews. According to F. Bradley Smith in *The Road to Nuremberg*, McCoy averred in December 1944 that "Hitler's 'mass extermination of Jews was only one of a

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number of military measures' that the Nazis employed to prosecute their operations in the 'most economic manner.'"

Of course, McCloy was hardly alone in failing to grasp the distinction between the Nazi war on the eastern and western fronts. From the start, the war on the eastern front was a racial war against the Jews; and it was inexorably transformed into the military objective of the entire Reich, so that by the end of the war, Auschwitz had come to be the reason for being of the Nazi effort. All this became clear, perhaps could only become clear, after the war. Still, McCloy was one of the few officials of the American government with the dark information at hand; and that fact makes his inaction and his obstructiveness almost criminal. According to Bird, had McCloy acceded to the bombing of railways leading to Auschwitz in August 1944, 100,000 Hungarian Jews would have been saved. But he had early on imbibed the establishment's outlook on the Jews. And so the effete racism of this elite came to be in league with the virulent Nazi brand, hopelessly besmirching Roosevelt's Four Freedoms.

As Thomas Alan Schwartz's illuminating book demonstrates, McCloy's appointment in 1949 as High Commissioner provided him with still another opportunity to tarnish the purposes and the ideals for which America had fought during the war. Espousing a policy of "dual containment" designed to prevent either the Soviet Union or Germany from dominating Europe, McCloy was determined to anchor the fledgling Federal Republic in the West at the expense of reunification. Schwartz, a professor of history at Vanderbilt University, shows that McCloy's central role in integrating the FRG militarily and economically into an American-led Western alliance cannot be divorced from his approach to the German past and to the moral rehabilitation of Germany. Unfortunately, his book suffers from academic hesitation and fails to provide a sense of the magnitude of McCloy's insouciance toward the German past. (It is also marred by misspellings of German proper names and words.)

Dubbed the "white years" by Reinhart Koselleck, the 1950s were a time of national amnesia in West Germany. The capricious de-Nazification program carried out by the United States between 1946 and 1947—in which high-ranking officials escaped prosecution while numerous small fry were imprisoned—gave Germans a welcome excuse to consign the Nazi era to oblivion. The new High Commissioner did nothing to discourage those inclinations.

In responding to the pleas of Adenauer and other German politicians imploring him to pardon convicted Nazi war criminals, McCloy appointed a panel headed by David Peck, a New York Supreme Court justice. After going over the panel's findings, McCloy, who had already freed former steel baron Friedrich Flick, commuted the sentence of Ernst von Weizsäcker, a Nazi foreign office official convicted of complicity in the deaths of 6,000 Jews transferred in March 1942 from France to Poland (and the father of Germany's current, and very different, president). In the end McCloy rejected some of the Peck panel's recommendations for leniency. But those whose sentences were commuted or reduced by the High Commissioner included all convicted concentration camp doctors, all judges who had administered "special courts," twenty out of twenty-five SS officers who had served in Einsatzgruppen, and, most famously, the Nazi industrialist Alfried Krupp, who drove off to a champagne breakfast to be greeted as a hero.

Certainly McCloy's lack of compassion for the Jews trapped in Auschwitz contrasts curiously with his solicitude for their persecutors. During the interwar period and even into the war, Wall Street financiers and lawyers such as John Foster Dulles had handled legal business for Nazi industrialists; McCloy appears to have shared an affection for the same business elite after World War II. McCloy restored Krupp's fortune and never forced him to pay compensation to Jews who had worked as slave labor in his factories. It is true that this man who had urged Truman not to recognize Israel was instrumental in securing German restitution payments to Israel, but Schwartz observes that McCloy may only have insisted on payments so that Germany could gain acceptance among the Western democracies.

It was also true that, as Fritz Ter Meer, a convicted I. G. Farben executive freed by McCloy, observed, "Now that they have Korea on their hands, the Americans are a lot more friendly." Schwartz writes that "McCloy's statements minimized the individual responsibility of the industrialists for Nazi crimes, thereby undermining one of the central principles of Nuremberg." But he then ties himself into knots: "To his credit, McCloy ... never failed to defend the Nuremberg principles, even when his actions seemed to contradict them."

McCloy's leniency toward former Nazis was not confined to the commutation of sentences. He helped cover up the escape of Klaus Barbie, and he appointed Hitler's head of military intelligence on the eastern front, General Reinhard Gehlen, to be Adenauer's adviser on external intelligence. McCloy had gone from hunting down German agents (during the Black Tom affair) to hiring them. These were not isolated incidents. They were symptomatic of his approach toward the disreputable part of Germany's history.

Though McCloy resigned from his post as High Commissioner in 1952, his interest in foreign affairs never flagged. His postwar career uncannily resembles that of another establishment figure who parlayed his government years into a career of lucrative influence peddling, Clark Clifford. When McCloy assumed the presidency of Chase in 1953, he knew little about banking. But David Rockefeller's mentor wasn't exactly hired to be a banker; he was, rather like Clifford, selling his reputation for integrity. According to Bird, "In an era when the Rockefeller name still evoked popular resentment, McCloy's disarming personality could be counted on to diffuse criticism." Bird makes no attempt to probe McCloy's inner life, and so he does not consider whether the self-effacing personality that disarmed the unwary may not have disguised an iron will.

On the side, McCloy ran Chase and tirelessly plumped for the "Seven Sister" oil companies. He was a central figure in oil diplomacy—he represented the Rockefellers through Chase and the oil companies through his law firm—and in 1961, while advising Kennedy on arms control, he extracted generous tax concessions for the oil companies from the president, as well as a promise that antitrust laws would be waived should the oil companies have to negotiate with OPEC. When Libya precipitated an oil crisis in 1971, the chiefs of the oil majors met in McCloy's New York offices to plan negotiations, with Justice Department officials looking on benignly. Not until 1974, during congressional investigations of multinationals, did Senator Clifford Case wonder how McCloy could have "represented everybody, including the U.S. government without the U.S. government knowing what was being done until you told them about it."

Then there was McCloy's recommendation to Nixon during the 1973 Yom Kippur War that he halt arms shipments to Israel. He and the officials of the Arabian American Oil Company drafted a memo to Nixon warning that "the real stakes are both our economy and our security." McCloy, in other words, was willing to countenance the destruction

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of Israel if that would serve higher interests, as he and ARAMCO defined them.

His sovereign disdain for those outside the charmed circle manifested itself once more during the Iranian revolution. McCloy, Rockefeller, and Henry Kissinger established a special mission, code-named "Project Alpha," to pressure the Carter administration, first privately, then publicly, into providing the Shah sanctuary in the United States. When Carter's acquiescence led to the taking of the hostages, the Project Alpha triumvirate "always refused to say they might have misjudged the situation," writes Bird. McCloy, who viewed the American hostages as dispensable, even managed to exploit the crisis for financial gain: after Carter froze Iranian assets, McCloy retroactively declared Chase loans to Iran in default, thereby saving millions for the Rockefellers. As usual, he saw no conflict of interest in advising Washington and representing Chase.

Thus McCloy put the connections and the influence he had acquired in his government years at the service of business interests. This was exactly the reverse, indeed it was the final decadence, of the earlier establishment ideal in which private profit was to be sacrificed to the public interest. But something of the old establishment had endured: the entanglement of commerce and politics and the scorn for inferior breeds. In this sense, the trajectory of McCloy's career returned him to the origins of the establishment.

It is all the more curious, then, to see how much admiration for McCloy flickers fitfully in the pages of Bird and Schwartz. Alluding delicately in his conclusion to McCloy's incarceration of the Japanese and obstruction of the bombing of Auschwitz as "troubling decisions," Bird writes that "often, however, his instincts were sound." In particular, Bird, like Schwartz, lauds his cold war management, asserting that McCloy "gambled" that the temporary division of Germany would lead to unification. This is farfetched. In 1961 McCloy actually applauded Khrushchev's construction of the Berlin Wall, though it ratified the division of Germany and hence of Europe. The record of his career gives ample evidence of his disregard for human rights where they were in conflict with more practical considerations. So there was no reason for him and the establishment that he "chaired" to think in terms of winning the cold war. Quite the contrary, he became rather cozy with the cold war, and, like Artemus Ward, counseled a policy of "a exceedin accommodatin character."

McCloy, for one, believed that the U.S.-Soviet rivalry could be regulated through contractual agreements. Bird, who admires McCloy's reluctance to bomb Hiroshima as well as his support for the Yalta Accords, surmises that "he understood that after Hiroshima, mankind would someday have to take the path to a disarmament system or not survive." This is an old and tired leftish notion, and it amounts to an updating of the old merchants-of-death theory about World War I. It is almost banal at this late date to point out that the arms race was the instrument, not the origin, of the cold war; and that the nature and the ambitions of the Soviet state justified American alarm. McCloy's emphasis on arms control agreements was misplaced (as is Bird's). The United States should have given more support to the human rights activists in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe who were responsible for the collapse of communism and the end of the cold war.

There was the danger, of course, that talking about human rights would seem like posturing when intervention was too dangerous. But accommodation to cold war "realities" could go to grotesque lengths, as when President Ford refused to meet Solzhenitsyn in the White House (palely imitated later by Bush's snub of Yeltsin). This perfectly expressed a McCloy-like attitude, which saw only an antagonism between rights and security, and was unable to imagine that an espousal of human rights within limits might be sound policy. For McCloy, it seems, decency and policy were almost always at loggerheads. Add the racial mixture and you have a virulent brew.

The cold war has ended, but the cold-blooded elitism embodied by McCloy lingers on among the remnants of the Eastern ascendancy. To be sure, George Bush, reduced to accommodating the lower orders by munching on pork rinds and visiting honky tonks, is more a misfit than a malevolent patrician. Still, his actions and his convictions—the hankering for the stability represented by the Soviet empire, the attempts to prop up oil prices, the refusal to extract human rights concessions from the Chinese government, the betrayal of the Kurds and Shiites in Iraq, the indifference to the Haitian refugees, the hostility to Israel—demonstrate again and again that the saga of "the American establishment" offers scant cause for celebration.

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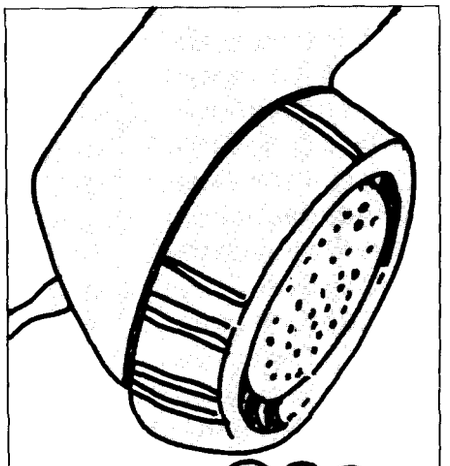

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Clintonfreude

I'LL VOTE FOR BILL CLINTON IN the District of Columbia primary on May 5. I agree with those who say he could be a very good president. Better than any of his Democratic opponents. Better than Bush or Perot. On the issues, he'll more than "do"—he's almost a neoliberal's dream. So why, when Clinton appeared to be heading for defeat in New York, was I pleased—no, gleeful? And why was it so depressing when, as the late New York exit polls came in, his lead began to widen? It wasn't because, in the ritual formulation, I have "doubts" about Clinton's "character." I do, but I also have a hard time arguing that these doubts (actually, they're virtual certainties) should weigh heavily in any sober political calculus. So he's a bit of a con man. We'll get used to it. It's not a crippling defect. True, at some point President Clinton would have to talk honestly to, say, Social Security recipients in a way he didn't during the Florida primary (when he savaged Paul Tsongas for suggesting a mild cost-of-living cut). But I'm confident Clinton is quite capable of turning around and selling a Social Security cut after denouncing it to get himself elected.

NO, THE TROUBLE ISN'T NECESSARily rational. It's emotional. Rationally, Clinton's got my vote. Emotionally, I'd like ... well, I'd like to see him crushed. I'm not proud of this; it isn't a healthy mental state. But if there are others who feel this way—and the hazing Clinton endured in New York is some evidence that there are—it's not healthy for the Democrats either. I suspect that if Clinton is going to win he'll have to confront and defuse the perverse subconscious desires of Democrats like me. Using myself as lab specimen, I detect several repressed sources of anti-Clinton animus, at least some of which may be shared by the voting public.

FIRST, JEALOUSY. PART OF THIS IS generational. Clinton, we're constantly reminded, would be the first baby boomer in the White House. Why him? I mean, we marched, we took drugs, we dodged tear gas—and this is our contribution, this non-inhaling, student-body president? I also admit to a more personal form of envy. Because of my profession, I've met and picked the brains of many of the Democratic policy types who would be swept into a Clinton administration. Some are friends. As James Atlas has pointed out, it's bad enough when your enemies succeed. When your friends succeed it's really intolerable. Am I completely sanguine at the prospect of TNR contributing editor Robert Reich moving into the West Wing as industrial policy czar? I confess to mixed emotions (and not because I disapprove of industrial policy). Of course, the general public doesn't share these petty professional rivalries. But you don't have to be a Beltway striver to be suspicious of Clinton's cozy network of mutually promoting Rhodes scholars.

THIS SUSPICION, I THINK, IS what lends potency to another source of anti-Clintonism: resentment of what at times seems an elite media conspiracy to elect the Arkansas governor. The obvious comparison is with the press's favorable treatment of John F. Kennedy in 1960. But there's a difference. Today the barrier between journalism and government service is much more porous than it was in the Kennedy era. I don't lament this development, but it means that many pro-Clinton journalists can reasonably hope for something more than glamorous candlelight dinners in the Clinton White House. They can hope for *jobs* in the Clinton White House. The air is thus thick with undisclosed ambition. To pick one example, Strobe Talbott of *Time*, who has skillfully defended his ex-Rhodesmate on television and in print, is surely a leading candidate for some sort of foreign policy post. And let's just say that the positions of press secretary and speechwriter to President Clinton will be among the more hotly contested employment opportunities to come along since those 9,000 people lined up for a few hotel jobs in Chicago last winter. Again, I'm not arguing there's anything wrong with reporters wanting to go to work for a politician they believe in. I've done it myself. (I cunningly hitched my wagon to the presidential star of Ernest Hollings.) For all I know Talbott would make a terrific national security adviser. But the voters reading and listening to him and his fellow Clinton promoters aren't being given everything they might need to know to evaluate what they're being told.

THERE ARE ALSO SUBSTANTIVE grounds for unease with (if not opposition to) Clinton's coterie of admirer/advisers. These people have spent twelve frustrating years out of office. Now, they tell us, they're confident they know how to halt the income inequality trend, make America competitive, assimilate the underclass. Their pent-up demand for power is so great it leaves little room for the entertainment of doubt. But some doubts may be warranted. Can the Clinton/Reich formula of training and tax changes really reverse the broad, global trend toward income inequality? Will Clinton's somewhat vague and toothless form of workfare dissolve the welfare-based underclass? Don't hold your breath. Another obvious Kennedy parallel, involving the Democrats' best and brightest, comes to mind.

THAT SUGGESTS WHAT MAY, in fact, be the most widespread cause of subconscious Clintophobia, namely Clinton's vaunted self-assurance. From his aides, to his ideas, to his humorless, self-righteous wife, his campaign oozes a kind of smugness. The candidate himself has developed a physical tic, a sort of cocky head-bob that probably started out a few decades ago as an endearing sign of aw-shucks modesty but that (to me, anyway) now seems the bodily manifestation of his unjustified certitude. I listen to his speeches and nod in agreement. But I'd feel more comfortable if he flubbed his lines, knocked over the water pitcher, tripped on the riser—made some major Gerald Ford-style mistake that produced a bit of humanizing self-doubt. If only his unlined face showed some pain. If only ...

I KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN THESE negative feelings surface. Pop in a therapeutic videotape of Mario Cuomo, especially his speech at Harvard last February discussing welfare reform. On the tape New York's governor is just as smug as Arkansas's governor. But Cuomo refuses to even quibble with the standard paleoliberal defense of welfare. The current debate on the subject, he declares, is a "diversion," a "Willie Horton." Why, welfare is "less than 1 percent of the federal budget." Cuomo then discusses the immense economic handicap of having an unskilled work force, of having children "who grow up familiar with the sound of gunfire"—as if these problems have nothing to do with the single-parent culture of dependency, as if the only cost of welfare were the budget cost. The most curative sound bite, however, comes when Cuomo brags that New York (where 1.1 million residents are on the dole) makes its welfare system work "as well or better than any state in America." Ah, yes. I feel better about Clinton already.

MICKEY KAUS

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Looking for Answers: U.S. and Asian Classrooms

By Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers

We probably wouldn't welcome yet another book giving us the bad news that American students do not achieve as well as Asian students. But *The Learning Gap: Why Our Schools Are Failing and What We Can Learn from Japanese and Chinese Education* (New York: Summit Books, 1992) by Harold W. Stevenson and James W. Stigler does far more than that: It challenges us to take a new look at some education practices that we have come to take for granted.

Stevenson and Stigler have been studying elementary schools in Minneapolis; metropolitan Chicago; Sendai, Japan; Taipei, Taiwan; and Beijing for over 10 years. Besides testing first and fifth graders and some kindergarten children, they have interviewed teachers, students and parents and spent many hours observing classes. Among the many fascinating things they've found are at least two radical differences in the way Asian and American teachers conduct and plan lessons.

The classes in the Asian schools that Stevenson and Stigler observed were typically much larger than we tend to think classes should be—38 to 50 students. And they were not grouped by ability—all the elementary school classes contained kids who were achieving at every level. But, like American teachers, the Japanese and Chinese teachers did a lot of teaching to the whole class. The difference, Stevenson and Stigler say, is that Asian teachers' classes were more like lessons than lectures. The Asian teachers didn't try to cover a lot of material. A math class, for example, might be organized around solving a single problem. As a result, the teachers had time to engage the entire group of 40 or so students in finding a satisfactory answer.

What accounts for these very big differences in classes that might seem to be similar?

In the course of this search, Asian teachers tried to get students to explain their reasoning and to evaluate their own answers and the answers other students gave. They also encouraged students to see that there were many different ways of solving a problem—some of them quicker or more elegant than others but all productive. By the end of the lesson, they could be pretty sure that everybody in their mixed-ability class understood the solution—and the various ways of getting to it—well enough to be able to build on it in future lessons.

American teachers, Stevenson and Stigler found, were much more likely to try to cover lots of territory, and they were much more answer-oriented. A teacher would ask a question, try to elicit the "right" answer from a student and then move quickly on. As a result, American kids, unlike Asian ones, did not get experience with the many ways of solving a problem. Lots of them probably concluded that a single "right" answer was all that was important anyway.

Why didn't American teachers challenge students on their answers and encourage other students to do so? Partly because they needed to get through a great deal of material. But the fear of humiliating students also played a big part. What if someone gave a wrong answer in discussion or up at the chalkboard? This did not seem to be a problem for the Asian teachers or students Stevenson and Stigler observed. Of course the kids were used to this way of conducting the class, but Stevenson and Stigler also noticed that Asian teachers did not convey the idea that there was anything shameful about getting a wrong answer. They considered it a part of the learning process and so, apparently, did the students.

What accounts for these very big differences in classes that, on the surface, might seem to be similar? One of the big reasons is the difference in the way American and Asian teachers prepare their lessons.

American teachers who take pride in their teaching are likely to think of a lesson as something personal. It is their own way of handling the material. The examples and questions are ones they have selected for their students. And their ideal might be a lesson that is fresh and new every time. But this is a standard that few people can live up to day after day and week after week.

The Asian teachers whom Stevenson and Stigler observed were more likely to work with other teachers—in part because they had more time to do so—to develop or revise an approach to a topic and to craft questions and examples. By pooling their experience and knowledge, they created common lessons that were of consistently high quality.

This may sound limited and limiting to people who consider preparing a lesson analogous to standing in front of a canvas on which they paint; it may sound like turning teaching into a rote exercise. But you could also compare the Asian teachers' approach to the way a number of different pianists would approach a concerto: They might have different interpretations and different styles, but they would all be playing the same notes.

If teaching is a performing art, as Asian teachers seem to think it is, teachers don't have to worry about composing a new concerto—or painting a new picture—for every class. They can practice and perfect ones they develop together with other teachers. They can rethink the questions that led to deep silence instead of a lively discussion and they can discard examples that failed last year or yesterday and think up new ones. And as they collaborate with other teachers, they can break out of the isolation in which they now work.

It's worth our thinking about.

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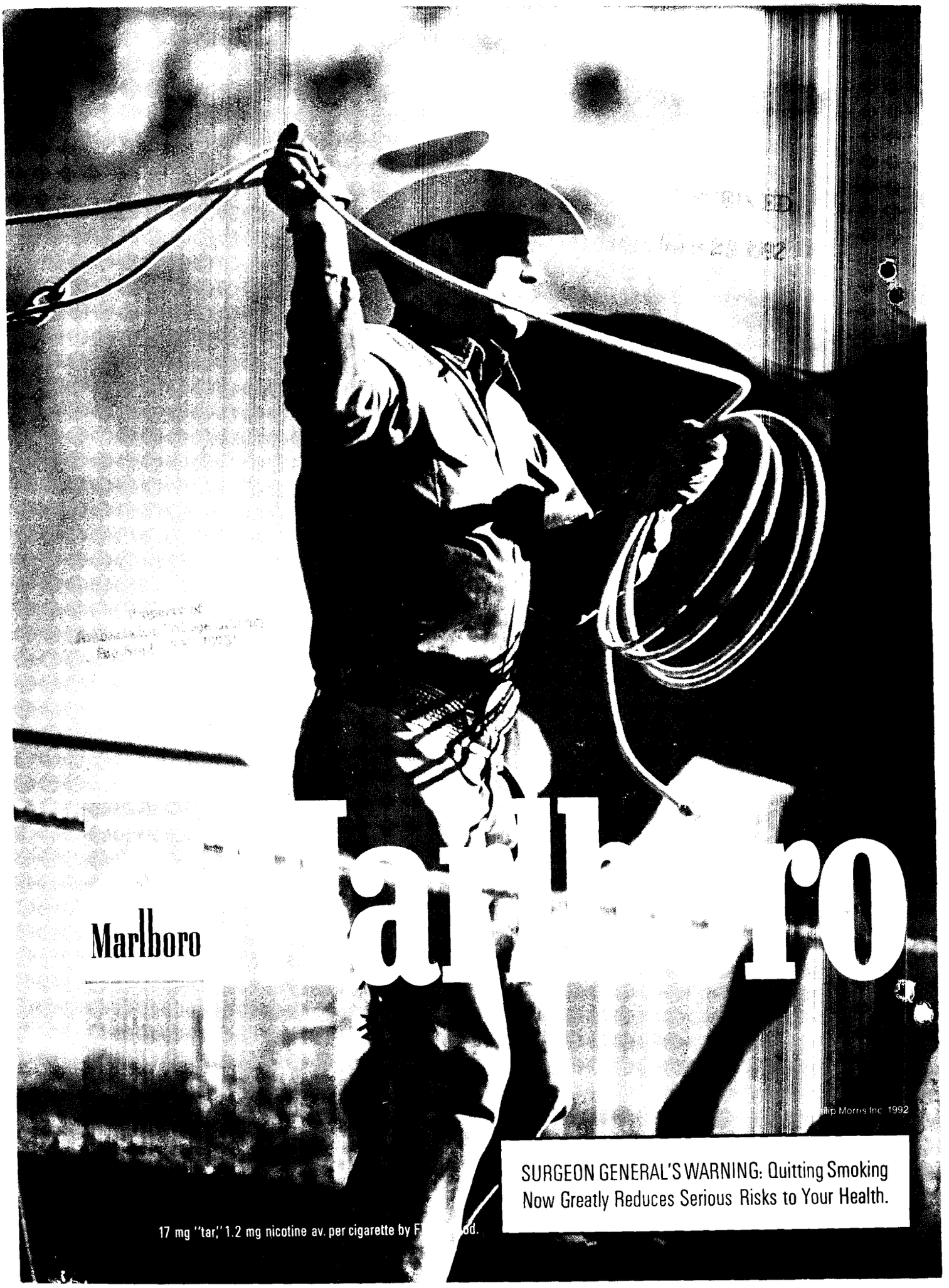
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